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LADY CONNIE.¹

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CHAPTER I.

'WELL, now we've done all we can, and all *I* mean to do,' said Alice Hooper, with a pettish accent of fatigue. 'Everything's perfectly comfortable, and if she doesn't like it, we can't help it. I don't know why we make such a fuss.'

The speaker threw herself with a gesture of fatigue into a dilapidated basket-chair that offered itself. It was a spring day, and the windows of the old school-room, in which she and her sister were sitting, were open to a back garden, untidily kept, but full of fruit trees just coming into blossom. Through their twinkling buds and interlacing branches could be seen, at some distance, grey college walls—part of the famous garden front of St. Cyprian's College, Oxford. There seemed to be a slight bluish mist over the garden and the distant building, a mist starred with patches of white blossom, and dazzlingly green leaf. And, above all, there was an evening sky, peaceful and luminous, from which a light wind blew towards the two girls sitting by the open window. One, the elder, had a face like a Watteau sketch, with black velvety eyes, hair drawn back from a white forehead, delicate little mouth, with sharp indentations at the corners, and a small chin. The other was much more solidly built—a girl of seventeen, in a plump phase, which, however, an intelligent eye would have read as not likely to last; a complexion of red and brown tanned by exercise; an expression in her clear eyes which was alternately frank and ironic; and an inconvenient mass of golden brown hair.

'We make a fuss, my dear,' said the younger sister, 'because

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we're bound to make a fuss. Connie, I understand, is to pay us a good round sum for her board and lodging, so it's only honest she should have a decent room.'

'Yes, but you don't know what she'll call decent,' said the other rather sulkily. 'She's probably been used to all sorts of silly luxuries.'

'Why, of course; considering Uncle Risborough was supposed to have twenty-odd thousand a year. We're paupers, and she's got to put up with us. But we couldn't take her money and do nothing in return.'

Nora Hooper looked rather sharply at her sister. It fell to her in the family to be constantly upholding the small daily traditions of honesty and fair play. It was she who championed the servants, or insisted, young as she was, on bills being paid, when it would have been more agreeable to buy frocks and go to London for a theatre. She was a great power in the house, and both her languid incompetent mother and her pretty sister were often afraid of her. Nora was a 'Home Student,' and had just begun to work seriously for English Literature Honours. Alice on the other hand was the domestic and social daughter. She helped her mother in the house, had a head full of undergraduates, and regarded the 'Eights' week and Commemoration as the shining events of the year.

Both girls were, however, at one in the uneasy or excited anticipation with which they were looking forward that evening to the arrival of a newcomer, who was, it seemed, to make part of the household for some time. Their father, Dr. Ewen Hooper, the holder of a recently founded classical Readership, had once possessed a younger sister of considerable beauty, who in the course of an independent and adventurous career, had captured—by no ignoble arts—a widower, who happened to be also an earl and a rich man. It happened while they were both wintering at Florence, the girl working at palæography, in the Ambrosian Library, while Lord Risborough, occupying a villa in the neighbourhood of the Torre San Gallo, was giving himself to the artistic researches and the cosmopolitan society which suited his health and his tastes. He was a dilettante of the old sort, incurably in love with living, in spite of the loss of his wife and his only son; in spite also of an impaired heart—in the physical sense—and various other drawbacks. He came across the bright girl student, discovered that she could talk very creditably about manuscripts and illuminations, gave her leave to work in his own library, where he possessed a

few priceless things, and presently found her company, her soft voice, and her eager, confiding eyes quite indispensable. His elderly sister, Lady Winifred, who kept house for him frowned on the business in vain ; and finally departed in a huff to join another maiden sister, Lady Marcia, in an English country *ménage*, where for some years she did little but lament the flesh-pots of Italy and Florence. The married sister, Lady Langmoor, wrote reams of plaintive remonstrances which remained unanswered. Lord Risborough married the girl-student, Ella Hooper, and never regretted it. They had one daughter, to whom they devoted themselves—preposterously, their friends thought ; but for nearly twenty years they were three happy people together. Then virulent influenza, complicated with pneumonia, carried off the mother during a spring visit to Rome, and six weeks later Lord Risborough died, of the damaged heart which had held out so long.

The daughter, Lady Constance Bledlow, had been herself attacked by the influenza epidemic which had killed her mother, and the double blow of her parents' death, coming on a neurasthenic condition, had hit her youth rather hard. Some old friends in Rome, with the full consent of her guardian, the Oxford Reader, had carried her off, first to Switzerland, and then to the Riviera for the winter, and now in May, about a year after the death of her parents, she was coming for the first time to make acquaintance with the Hooper family, with whom, according to her father's will, she was to make her home till she was twenty-one. None of them had ever seen her, except on two occasions : once, at a hotel in London ; and once, some ten years before this date, when Lord Risborough had been D.C.L.-ed at the Encænna, as a reward for some valuable gifts which he had made to the Bodleian, and he, his wife, and his little girl, after they had duly appeared at the All Souls luncheon, and the official fête in St. John's Gardens, had found their way to the house in Holywell, and taken tea with the Hoopers.

Nora's mind, as she and her sister sat waiting for the fly in which Mrs. Hooper had gone to meet her husband's niece at the station, ran persistently on her own childish recollections of this visit. She sat in the window-sill, with her hand behind her, chattering to her sister.

'I remember thinking when Connie came in here to tea with us—"What a stuck-up thing you are!" And I despised her, because she couldn't climb the mulberry in the garden, and because she hadn't begun Latin. But all the time, I envied her horribly, and I expect you did too, Alice. Can't you see her black silk

stockings—and her new hat with those awfully pretty flowers, made of feathers? She had a silk frock too—white, very skimpy, and short; and enormously long black legs, as thin as sticks; and her hair in plaits. I felt a thick lump beside her. And I didn't like her at all. What horrid toads children are! She didn't talk to us much, but her eyes seemed to be always laughing at us, and when she talked Italian to her mother, I thought she was showing off, and I wanted to pinch her for being affected.'

'Why, of course she talked Italian,' said Alice, who was not much interested in her sister's recollections.

'Naturally. But that didn't somehow occur to me. After all I was only seven.'

'I wonder if she's really good-looking,' said Alice slowly, glancing, as she spoke, at the reflection of herself in an old dilapidated mirror, which hung on the school-room wall.

'The photos are,' said Nora, decidedly. 'Goodness, I wish she'd come and get it over. I want to get back to my work—and till she comes, I can't settle to anything.'

'Well, they'll be here directly. I wonder what on earth she'll do with all her money. Father says she may spend it, if she wants to. He's trustee, but Uncle Risborough's letter to him said she was to have the income if she wished—*now*. Only she's not to touch the capital till she's twenty-five.'

'It's a good lot, isn't it?' said Nora, walking about. 'I wonder how many people in Oxford have two thousand a year? A girl too. It's really rather exciting.'

'It won't be very nice for us—she'll be so different.' Alice's tone was a little sulky and depressed. The advent of this girl cousin, with her title, her good looks, her money, and her unfair advantages in the way of talking French and Italian, was only moderately pleasant to the eldest Miss Hooper.

'What—you think she'll snuff us out?' laughed Nora. 'Not she! Oxford's not like London. People are not such snobs.'

'What a silly thing to say, Nora! As if it wasn't an enormous pull everywhere to have a handle to your name, and lots of money!'

'Well, I really think it'll matter less here than anywhere. Oxford, my dear—or some of it—pursues "the good and the beautiful"'—said Nora, taking a flying leap on to the window-sill again, and beginning to poke up some tadpoles in a jar, which stood on the window-ledge.

Alice did not think it worth while to continue the conversation. She had little or nothing of Nora's belief in the other-worldliness

of Oxford. At this period, some thirty odd years ago, the invasion of Oxford on the north by whole new tribes of citizens had already begun. The old days of University exclusiveness in a ring fence were long done with ; the days of much learning and simple ways, when there were only two carriages in Oxford that were not doctor's carriages, when the wives of professors and tutors went out to dinner in 'chairs' drawn by men, and no person within the magic circle of the University knew anybody—to speak of—in the town outside. The University indeed, at this later moment, still more than held its own, socially, amid the waves of new population that threatened to submerge it ; and the occasional spectacle of retired generals and colonels, the growing number of broughams and victorias in the streets, or the rumours of persons with 'smart' or 'county' connections to be found among the rows of new villas spreading up the Banbury Road were still not sufficiently marked to disturb the essential character of the old and beautiful place. But new ways and new manners were creeping in, and the young were sensitively aware of them, like birds that feel the signs of coming weather.

Alice fell into a brown study. She was thinking about a recent dance given at a house in the Parks, where some of her particular friends had been present, and where, on the whole, she had enjoyed herself greatly. Nothing is ever perfect, and she would have liked it better if Herbert Pryce's sister had not—past all denying—had more partners and a greater success than herself, and if Herbert Pryce himself had not been—just a little—casual and inattentive. But after all they had had two or three glorious supper dances, and he certainly would have kissed her hand, while they were sitting out in the garden, if she had not made haste to put it out of his reach. 'You never did anything of the kind, till you were sure he did not mean to kiss it !' said conscience. 'I did not give myself away in the least !'—was vanity's angry reply. 'I was perfectly dignified.'

Herbert Pryce was a young Fellow and tutor—a mathematical fellow ; and therefore, Alice's father, for whom Greek was the only study worth the brains of a rational being, could not be got to take the smallest interest in him. But he was certainly very clever, and it was said he was going to get a post at Cambridge—or something at the Treasury—which would enable him to marry. Alice suddenly had a vague vision of her own wedding ; the beautiful central figure—she would certainly look beautiful in her wedding dress !—bowing so gracefully ; the bridesmaids behind, in her

favourite colours, white and pale green ; and the tall man beside her. But Herbert Pryce was not really tall, and not particularly good-looking, though he had a rather distinguished hatchet face, with a good forehead. Suppose Herbert and Vernon and all her other friends were to give up being ' nice ' to her as soon as Connie Bledlow appeared ? Suppose she was going to be altogether cut out and put in the background ? Alice had a kind of uneasy foreboding that Herbert Pryce would think a title ' interesting.'

Meanwhile Nora, having looked through an essay on ' Piers Plowman,' which she was to take to her English Literature tutor on the following day, went aimlessly upstairs and put her head into Connie's room. The old house was panelled, and its guest room, though small and shabby, had yet absorbed from its oaken walls, and its outlook on the garden and St. Cyprian's, a certain measure of the Oxford charm. The furniture was extremely simple—a large hanging cupboard made by curtaining one of the panelled recesses of the wall, a chest of drawers, a bed, a small dressing-table and glass, a carpet that was the remains of one which had originally covered the drawing-room for many years, an armchair, a writing-table, and curtains which having once been blue had now been dyed a serviceable though ugly dark red. In Nora's eyes it was all comfortable and nice. She herself had insisted on having the carpet and curtains re-dipped, so that they really looked almost new, and the one mattress on the bed ' made over ' ; she had brought up the armchair, and she had gathered the cherry-blossom, which stood on the mantelpiece shining against the darkness of the walls. She had also hung above it a photograph of Watts' ' Love and Death.' Nora looked at the picture and the flowers with a throb of pleasure. Alice never noticed such things.

And now what about the maid ? Fancy bringing a maid ! Nora's sentiments on the subject were extremely scornful. However, Connie had simply taken it for granted, and she had been housed somehow. Nora climbed up an attic stair and looked into a room which had a dormer window in the roof, two strips of carpet on the boards, a bed, a washing-stand, a painted chest of drawers, a table, with an old looking-glass, and two chairs. ' Well, that's all I have ! ' thought Nora defiantly. But a certain hospitable or democratic instinct made her go downstairs again and bring up a small vase of flowers like those in Connie's room, and put it on the maid's table. The maid was English, but she had lived a long time abroad with the Risboroughs.

Sounds! Yes, that was the fly stopping at the front door! Nora flew downstairs, in a flush of excitement. Alice too had come out into the hall, looking shy and uncomfortable. Dr. Hooper emerged from his study. He was a big, loosely built man, with a shock of grizzled hair, spectacles, and a cheerful expression.

A tall, slim girl, in a grey dust-cloak and a large hat, entered the dark panelled hall, looking round her. 'Welcome, my dear Connie!' said Dr. Hooper, cordially, taking her hand and kissing her. 'Your train must have been a little late.'

'Twenty minutes!' said Mrs. Hooper, who had followed her niece into the hall. 'And the draughts in the station, Ewen, were something appalling.'

The tone was fretful. It had even a touch of indignation as though the speaker charged her husband with the draughts. Mrs. Hooper was a woman between forty and fifty, small and plain, except for a pair of rather fine eyes, which, in her youth, while her cheeks were still pink, and the obstinate lines of her thin slit mouth and prominent chin were less marked, had beguiled several lovers, Ewen Hooper at their head.

Dr. Hooper took no notice of her complaints. He was saying to his niece—'This is Alice, Constance—and Nora! You'll hardly remember each other again, after all these years.'

'Oh, yes, I remember quite well,' said a clear, high-pitched voice. 'How do you do?—how do you do?'

And the girl held a hand out to each cousin in turn. She did not offer to kiss either Alice or Nora. But she looked at them steadily, and suddenly Nora was aware of that expression of which she had so vivid although so childish a recollection—as though a satiric spirit sat hidden and laughing in the eyes, while the rest of the face was quite grave.

'Come in and have some tea. It's all ready,' said Alice, throwing open the drawing-room door. Her face had cleared suddenly. It did not seem to her, at least in the shadows of the hall, that her cousin Constance was anything of a beauty.

'I'm afraid I must look after Annette first. She's much more important than I am!'

And the girl ran back to where a woman in a blue serge coat and skirt was superintending the carrying in of the luggage. There was a great deal of luggage, and Annette, who wore a rather cross, flushed air, turned round every now and then to look frowningly at the old gabled house into which it was being carried, as though she were more than doubtful whether the building would hold

the boxes. Yet as houses went, in the older parts of Oxford, Medburn House, Holywell, was roomy.

'Annette, don't do any unpacking till after tea!' cried Lady Constance. 'Just get the boxes carried up, and rest a bit. I'll come and help you later.'

The maid said nothing. Her lips seemed tightly compressed. She stepped into the hall, and spoke peremptorily to the white-capped house-parlourmaid who stood bewildered among the trunks.

'Have those boxes'—she pointed to four—two large American saratogas, and two smaller trunks—'carried up to her ladyship's room. The other two can go into mine.'

'Miss!' whispered the agitated maid in Nora's ear, 'we'll never get any of those boxes up the top-stairs. And if we put them four into her ladyship's room, she'll not be able to move.'

'I'll come and see to it,' said Nora, snatching up a bag. 'They've got to go somewhere!'

Mrs. Hooper repeated that Nora would manage it, and languidly waved her niece towards the drawing-room. The girl hesitated, laughed, and finally yielded, seeing that Nora was really in charge. Dr. Hooper led her in, placed an armchair for her beside the tea-table, and stood closely observing her.

'You're like your mother,' he said at last, in a low voice; 'at least in some points.' The girl turned away abruptly, as though what he said jarred, and addressed herself to Alice.

'Poor Annette was very sick. It was a vile crossing.'

'Oh, the servants will look after her,' said Alice indifferently.

'Everybody has to look after Annette!—or she'll know the reason why,' laughed Lady Constance, removing her black gloves from a very small and slender hand. She was dressed in deep mourning with crape still upon her hat and dress, though it was more than a year since her mother's death. Such mourning was not customary in Oxford, and Alice Hooper thought it affected.

Mrs. Hooper then made the tea. But the newcomer paid little attention to the cup placed beside her. Her eyes wandered round the group at the tea-table; her uncle, a man of originally strong physique, marred now by the student's stoop, and by weak eyes, tried by years of Greek and German type; her aunt—

'What a very odd woman Aunt Ellen is!' thought Constance.

For, all the way from the station, Mrs. Hooper had talked about scarcely anything but her own ailments, and the Oxford

climate. 'She told us all about her rheumatisms—and the east winds—and how she ought to go to Buxton every year—only Uncle Hooper wouldn't take things seriously. And she never asked us anything at all about our passage, or our night journey! And there was Annette—as yellow as an egg—and as *cross*—'

However, Dr. Hooper was soon engaged in making up for his wife's shortcomings. He put his niece through many questions as to the year which had elapsed since her parents' death; her summer in the high Alps, and her winter at Cannes.

'I never met your friends—Colonel and Mrs. King. We are not military in Oxford. But they seem—to judge from their letters—to be very nice people,' said the Professor, his tone, quite unconsciously, suggesting the slightest shade of patronage.

'Oh, they're dears,' said the girl warmly. 'They were awfully good to me.'

'Cannes was very gay, I suppose?'

'We saw a great many people in the afternoons. The Kings knew everybody. But I didn't go out in the evenings.'

'You weren't strong enough?'

'I was in mourning,' said the girl, looking at him with her large and brilliant eyes.

'Yes, yes, of course!' murmured the Reader, not quite understanding why he felt himself a trifle snubbed. He asked a few more questions, and his niece, who seemed to have no shyness, gave a rapid description, as she sipped her tea, of the villa at Cannes in which she had passed the winter months, and of the half-dozen families, with whom she and her friends had been mostly thrown. Alice Hooper was secretly thrilled by some of the names which dropped out casually. She always read the accounts in the *Queen*, or the *Sketch*, of 'smart society' on the Riviera, and it was plain to her that Constance had been dreadfully 'in it.' It would not apparently have been possible to be more 'in it.' She was again conscious of a hot envy of her cousin which made her unhappy. Also Connie's good looks were becoming more evident. She had taken off her hat, and all the distinction of her small head, her slender neck and sloping shoulders, was more visible; her self-possession, too, the ease and vivacity of her gestures. Her manner was that of one accustomed to a large and varied world, who took all things without surprise, as they came. Dr. Hooper had felt some emotion, and betrayed some, in this meeting with his favourite sister's motherless child; but the girl's only betrayal of feeling

had lain in the sharpness with which she had turned away from her uncle's threatened effusion. 'And how she looks at us!' thought Alice. 'She looks at us through and through. Yet she doesn't stare.'

But at that moment, Alice heard the word 'prince,' and her attention was instantly arrested.

'We had some Russian neighbours,' the newcomer was saying; 'Prince and Princess Jaroslav; and they had an English party at Christmas. It was great fun. They used to take us out riding into the mountains, or into Italy.' She paused a moment, and then said—carelessly—as though to keep up the conversation—'There was a Mr. Falloden with them—an undergraduate—at Marmion College, I think. Do you know him, Aunt Ellen?' She turned towards her aunt.

But Mrs. Hooper only looked blank. She was just thinking anxiously that she had forgotten to take her tabloids after lunch, because Ewen had hustled her off so much too soon to the station.

'I don't think we know him,' she said vaguely, turning towards Alice.

'We know all about him! I was introduced to him once.'

The tone of the eldest Miss Hooper could scarcely have been colder. The eyes of the girl opposite suddenly sparkled into laughter.

'You didn't like him?'

'Nobody does. He gives himself such ridiculous airs.'

'Does he?' said Constance. The information seemed to be of no interest to her. She asked for another cup of tea.

'Oh, Falloden of Marmion?' said Dr. Hooper. 'I know him quite well. One of the best pupils I have. But I understand he's the heir to his old uncle, Lord Dagnall, and is going to be enormously rich. His father's a millionaire already. So of course he'll soon forget his Greek. A horrid waste!'

'He's *detested* in College!' Alice's small face lit up vindictively. 'There's a whole set of them. Other people call them "the Bloods." The dons would like to send them all down.'

'They won't send Falloden down, my dear, before he gets his First in Greats, which he will do this summer. But this is his last term. I never knew anyone write better Greek iambs than that fellow,' said the Reader, pausing in the middle of his cup of tea, to murmur certain Greek lines to himself. They were part of the brilliant copy of verses by which Douglas Falloden of Marmion,

in a fiercely contested year, had finally won the Ireland, Ewen Hooper being one of the examiners.

'That's what's so abominable,' said Alice, setting her small mouth. 'You don't expect *reading* men to drink, and get into rows.'

'Drink?' said Constance Bledlow, raising her eyebrows.

Alice went into details. The dons of Marmion, she said, were really frightened by the spread of drinking in College, all caused by the bad example of the Falloden set. She talked fast and angrily, and her cousin listened, half scornfully, but still attentively.

'Why don't they keep him in order?' she said at last; 'we did!' And she made a little gesture with her hand, impatient and masterful, as though dismissing the subject.

And at that moment Nora came into the room, flushed either with physical exertion, or the consciousness of her own virtue. She found a place at the tea-table, and panting a little, demanded to be fed.

'It's hungry work, carrying up trunks!'

'You didn't!' exclaimed Constance, in large-eyed astonishment. 'I say, I *am* sorry! Why did you? I'm sure they were too heavy. Why didn't Annette get a man?'

And sitting up, she bent across the table, all charm suddenly, and soft distress.

'We did get one, but he was a wretched thing. I was worth two of him,' said Nora triumphantly. 'You should feel my biceps. There!'

And slipping up her loose sleeve, she showed an arm, at which Constance Bledlow laughed. And her laugh touched her face with something audacious—something wild—which transformed it.

'I shall take care how I offend you!'

Nora nodded over her tea.

'Your maid was shocked. She said I might as well have been a man.'

'It's quite true,' sighed Mrs. Hooper. 'You always were such a tomboy, Nora.'

'Not at all! But I wish to develop my muscles. That's why I do Swedish exercises every morning. It's ridiculous how flabby girls are. There isn't a girl in my lecture I can't put down. If you like, I'll teach you my exercises,' said Nora, her mouth full of tea cake, and her expression half friendly, half patronising.

Connie Bledlow did not immediately reply. She seemed to be quietly examining Nora, as she had already examined Alice, and that odd gleam in the eyes' under-depths appeared again. But at last she said—smiling—

'Thank you. But my muscles are quite strong enough for the only exercise I want. You said I might have a horse, Uncle Ewen, didn't you?' She turned eagerly to the master of the house.

Dr. Hooper looked at his wife with some embarrassment. 'I want you to have anything you wish for—in reason—my dear Connie; but your aunt is rather exercised about the proprieties.'

The small dried-up woman behind the tea-urn said sharply—

'A girl can't ride alone in Oxford—she'd be talked about at once!'

Lady Connie flushed mutinously.

'I could take a groom, Aunt Ellen!'

'Well, I don't approve of it,' said Mrs. Hooper, in the half-plaintive tone of one who must speak although no one listens. 'But of course your uncle must decide.'

'We'll talk it over, my dear Connie, we'll talk it over,' said Dr. Hooper cheerfully. 'Now wouldn't you like Nora to show you to your room?'

The girls went upstairs together, Nora leading the way.

'It's an awful squash in your room,' said Nora abruptly. 'I don't know how you'll manage.'

'My fault, I suppose, for bringing so many things! But where else could I put them?'

Nora nodded gravely, as though considering the excuse. The newcomer suddenly felt herself criticised by this odd schoolgirl, and resented it.

The door of the spare-room was open, and the girls entered upon a scene of chaos. Annette rose from her knees, showing a brick-red countenance of wrath that strove in vain for any sort of dignity. And again that look of distant laughter came into Lady Connie's eyes.

'My dear Annette, why aren't you having a rest, as I told you? I can do with anything to-night.'

'Well, my lady, if you'll tell me how you'll get into bed, unless I put some of these things away, I should be obliged!' said Annette, with a dark look at Nora. 'I've asked for a wardrobe for you

and this young lady says there isn't one. There's that hanging cupboard'—she pointed witheringly to the curtained recess—'your dresses will be ruined there in a fortnight. And there's that chest of drawers. Your things will have to stay in the trunks, as far as I can see, and then you might as well sleep on them. It would give you more room!'

With which stroke of sarcasm, Annette returned to the angry unpacking of her mistress's bag.

'I must buy a wardrobe,' said Connie, looking round her in perplexity. 'Never mind, Annette, I can easily buy one.'

It was now Nora's turn to colour.

'You mustn't do that,' she said firmly. 'Father wouldn't like it. We'll find something. But do you *want* such a lot of things?'

She looked at the floor heaped with every variety of delicate mourning, black dresses, thick and thin, for morning and afternoon; and black and white, or pure white, for the evening. And what had happened to the bed? It was already divested of the twilled cotton sheets and marcella quilt which were all the Hoopers ever allowed either to themselves or their guests. They had been replaced by sheets of the finest and smoothest linen, embroidered with a crest and monogram in the corners, and by a coverlet of old Italian lace lined with pale blue silk; while the down pillows at the head with their embroidered and lace-trimmed slips completed the transformation of what had been a bed, and was now almost a work of art.

And the dressing-table! Nora went up to it in amazement. It too was spread with lace lined with silk, and covered with a toilet-set of mother-of-pearl and silver. Every brush and bottle was crested and initialled. The humble looking-glass, which Nora, who was something of a carpenter, had herself mended before her cousin's arrival, was standing on the floor in a corner, and a folding mirror framed in embossed silver had taken its place.

'I say, do you always travel with these things?' The girl stood open-mouthed, half astonished, half contemptuous.

'What things?'

Nora pointed to the toilet table and the bed.

Connie's expression showed an answering astonishment.

'I have had them all my life,' she said stiffly. 'We always took our own linen to hotels, and made our rooms nice.'

'I should think you'd be afraid of their being stolen!' Nora took up one of the costly brushes, and examined it in wonder.

'Why should I be? They're nothing. They're just like other people's!' With a slight but haughty change of manner, the girl turned away, and began to talk Italian to her maid.

'I never saw anything like them!' said Nora stoutly.

Constance Bledlow took no notice. She and Annette were chattering fast, and Nora could not understand a word. She stood by awkward and superfluous, feeling certain that the maid who was gesticulating, now towards the ceiling, and now towards the floor, was complaining both of her own room and of the kitchen accommodation. Her mistress listened carelessly, occasionally trying to soothe her, and in the middle of the stream of talk, Nora slipped away.

'It's *horrid*!—spending all that money on yourself,' thought the girl of seventeen, indignantly. 'And in Oxford too!—as if anybody wanted such things here.'

Meanwhile, she was no sooner gone than her cousin sank down on the armchair, and broke into a slightly hysterical fit of laughter.

'Can we stand it, Annette? We've got to try. Of course you can leave me if you choose.'

'And I should like to know how you'd get on then!' said Annette grimly, beginning again upon the boxes.

'Well, of course, I shouldn't get on at all. But really we might give away a lot of these clothes! I shall never want them.'

The speaker looked frowning at the stacks of dresses and lingerie. Annette made no reply; but went on busily with her unpacking. If the clothes were to be got rid of, they were her perquisites. She was devoted to Constance, but she stood on her rights.

Presently, a little space was cleared on the floor, and Constance, seeing that it was nearly seven o'clock, and the Hoopers supped at half-past, took off her black dress with its crape, and put on a white one, high to the throat and long-sleeved; a French demi-toilette, plain, and even severe in make, but cut by the best dressmaker in Nice. She looked extraordinarily tall and slim in it, and very foreign. Her maid clasped a long string of pearls, which was her only ornament, round her neck. She gave one look at herself in the glass, holding herself proudly, one might have said arrogantly. But as she turned away, and so that Annette could not see her, she

raised her pearls, and held them a moment softly to her lips. They had been her mother's.

Then she moved to the window, and looked out, over the Hoopers' private garden, to the spreading college lawns, and the grey front beyond.

'Am I really going to stay here a whole year—nearly?' she asked herself, half laughing, half rebellious.

Then her eye fell upon a medley of photographs; snaps from her own camera, which had tumbled out of her bag in unpacking. The topmost one represented a group of young men and maidens standing under a group of stone pines in a Riviera landscape. She herself was in front, with a tall youth beside her. She bent down to look at it.

'I shall come across him I suppose—before long.'

And raising herself, she stood awhile, thinking; her face alive with an excitement that was half expectation, and half angry recollection.

CHAPTER II.

'My dear Ellen, I beg you will not interfere any more with Connie's riding. I have given leave, and that really must settle it. She tells me that her father always allowed her to ride alone—with a groom—in London and the Campagna; she will of course pay all the expenses of it out of her own income, and I see no object whatever in thwarting her. She is sure to find our life dull enough anyway, after the life she has been living.'

'I don't know why you should call Oxford dull, Ewen!' said Mrs. Hooper resentfully. 'I consider the society here much better than anything Connie was likely to see in the Riviera—much more respectable anyway. Well, of course, *everybody* will call her fast—but that's your affair. I can see already she won't be easily restrained. She's got an uncommonly strong will of her own.'

'Well, don't try and restrain her, dear, too much,' laughed her husband. 'After all she's twenty, she'll be twenty-one directly. She may not be more than a twelvemonth with us. She need not be, as far as my functions are concerned. Let's make friends with her and make her happy.'

'I don't want my girls talked about, thank you, Ewen!' His wife gave an angry dig to the word 'my.' 'Everybody says

what a nice lady-like girl Alice is. But Nora often gives me a deal of trouble—and if she takes to imitating Connie, and wanting to go about without a chaperon, I don't know what I shall do. My dear Ewen, do you know what I discovered last night ?'

Mrs. Hooper rose and stood over her husband impressively.

'Well—what ?'

'You remember Connie went to bed early. Well, when I came up, and passed her door, I noticed something—somebody in that room was—*smoking* ! I could not be mistaken. And this morning I questioned the housemaid. "Yes, Ma'am," she said, "her ladyship smoked two cigarettes last night, and Mrs. Tinkler"—that's the maid—"says she always smokes two before she goes to bed." Then I spoke to Tinkler—whose manner to me, I consider, is not at all what it should be—and she said that Connie smoked three cigarettes a day always—that Lady Risborough smoked—that all the ladies in Rome smoked—that Connie began it before her mother died—and her mother didn't mind—'

'Well then, my dear, you needn't mind,' exclaimed Dr. Hooper.

'I always thought Ella Risborough went to pieces—rather—in that dreadful foreign life,' said Mrs. Hooper firmly. 'Everybody does—you can't help it.'

'I don't know what you mean by going "to pieces,"' said Ewen Hooper warmly. 'I only know that when they came here ten years ago, I thought her one of the most attractive—one of the most charming women I had ever seen.'

From where he stood, on the hearth-rug of his study, smoking an after-breakfast pipe, he looked down—frowning—upon his wife, and Mrs. Hooper felt that she had perhaps gone too far. Never had she forgotten, never had she ceased to resent her own sense of inferiority and disadvantage, beside her brilliant sister-in-law on the occasion of that long past visit. She could still see Ella Risborough at the All Souls luncheon given to the newly-made D.C.L.s, sitting on the right of the Vice-Chancellor, and holding a kind of court afterwards in the Library ; a hat that was little more than a wreath of forget-me-nots on her dark hair, and a long, lace cloak draping the still young and graceful figure. She remembered vividly the soft responsive eyes and smile, and the court of male worshippers about them. Professors, tutors young and old, undergraduates and heads of houses, had crowded round the mother and the long-legged, distinguished-looking child, who clung so closely to her side ; and if only she could have given

Oxford a few more days, the whole place would have been at Ella Risborough's feet. 'So intelligent too!' said the enthusiastic—'so learned even!' A member of the Roman 'Accademia dei Lincei,' with only one other woman to keep her company in that august band; and yet so modest, so unpretending, so full of laughter, and life, and sex! Mrs. Hooper, who generally found herself at these official luncheons in a place which her small egotism resented, had watched her sister-in-law from a distance, envying her dress, her title, her wealth, bitterly angry that Ewen's sister should have a place in the world that Ewen's wife could never hope to touch, and irrevocably deciding that Ella Risborough was 'fast' and gave herself airs. Nor did the afternoon visit, when the Risboroughs, with great difficulty, had made time for the family call on the Hoopers, supply any more agreeable memories. Ella Risborough had been so rapturously glad to see her brother, and in spite of a real effort to be friendly, had had so little attention to spare for his wife! It was true she had made much of the Hooper children, and had brought them all presents from Italy. But Mrs. Hooper had chosen to think the laughing sympathy and evident desire to please 'affectation,' or patronage, and had been vexed in her silent corner to see how little her own two girls could hold their own beside Constance.

As for Lord Risborough, he had frankly found it difficult to remember Mrs. Hooper's identity, while on the other hand he fell at once into keen discussion of some recent finds in the Greek islands with Ewen Hooper, to whom in the course of half an hour it was evident that he took a warm liking. He put up his eye-glass to look at the Hooper children; he said vaguely, 'I hope that some day you and Mrs. Hooper will descend upon us in Rome'; and then he hurried his wife away with the audible remark—'We really must get to Blenheim, Ellie, in good time. You promised the Duchess——'

So ill-bred—so snobbish—to talk of your great acquaintances in public! And as for Lady Risborough's answer—'I don't care twopence about the Duchess, Hugh! and I haven't seen Ewen for six years,'—it had been merely humbug, for she had obediently followed her husband, all the same.

Recollections of this kind went trickling through Mrs. Hooper's mind, roused by Ewen's angry defence of his sister. It was all very well, but now the long-legged child had grown up, and was going to put her—Ellen Hooper's—daughters in the shade, to

make them feel their inferiority, just as the mother had done with herself. Of course the money was welcome. Constance was to contribute three hundred a year, which was a substantial addition to an income which, when all supplemental earnings—exams, journalism, lectures—were counted, rarely reached seven hundred. But they would be 'led into expenses'—the maid was evidently a most exacting woman; and meanwhile, Alice, who was just out, and was really quite a pretty girl, would be entirely put in the background by this young woman with her forward manner, and her title, and the way she had as though the world belonged to her. Mrs. Hooper felt no kinship with her whatever. She was Ewen's blood—not hers; and the mother's jealous nature was all up in arms for her own brood—especially for Alice. Nora could look after herself, and invariably did. Beside Nora was so tiresome! She was always ready to give the family case away—to give everything away, preposterously. And *à propos*, Mrs. Hooper expressed her annoyance with some silly notions Nora had just expressed to her.

'I do hope, Ewen, you won't humour and spoil Constance too much! Nora says now she's dissatisfied with her room and wants to buy some furniture.' Well, let her, I say. She has plenty of money, and we haven't. We have given her a great deal more than we give our own daughters——'

'She pays us, my dear!'

Mrs. Hooper straightened her thin shoulders.

'Well, and you give her the advantage of your name and your reputation here. It is not as though you were a young don, a nobody. You've made your position. Everybody asks us to all the official things—and Connie, of course, will be asked too.'

A smile crept round Dr. Hooper's weak and pleasant mouth.

'Don't flatter yourself, Ellen, that Connie will find Oxford society very amusing after Rome and the Riviera.'

'That will be her misfortune,' said Mrs. Hooper, stoutly. 'Anyway she will have all the advantages we have. We take her with us for instance to the Vice-Chancellor's to-night!'

'Do we?' Dr. Hooper groaned. 'By the way, can't you let me off, Ellen? I've got such a heap of work to do.'

'Certainly not! People who shut themselves up never get on, Ewen. I've just finished mending your gown, on purpose. How you tear it as you do, I can't think! But I was speaking of Connie. We shall take her of course——'

'Have you asked her?'

'I told her we were *all* going—and to meet Lord Glaramara. She didn't say anything.'

Dr. Hooper laughed.

'You'll find her, I expect, a very independent young woman——'

But at that moment his daughter Nora, after a hurried and perfunctory knock, opened the study door vehemently, and put in a flushed face.

'Father, I want to speak to you!'

'Come in, my dear child. But I can't spare more than five minutes.'

And the Reader glanced despairingly at a clock, the hands of which were pointing to half-past ten A.M. How it was that, after an eight o'clock breakfast, it always took so long for a man to settle himself to his work he really could not explain. Not that his conscience did not sometimes suggest the answer; pointing to a certain slackness and softness in himself—the primal shrinking from work, the primal instinct to sit and dream—that had every day to be met and conquered afresh, before the student actually found himself in his chair, or lecturing from his desk, with all his brains alert. Anyway, the Reader, when there was no college or university engagement to pin him down, would stand often—'spilling the morning in recreation'; in other words, gossiping with his wife and children, or loitering over the newspapers, till the inner monitor turned upon him. Then he would work furiously for hours; and the work when done was good. For there would be in it a kind of passion, a warmth born of the very effort and friction of the will which had been necessary to get it done at all.

Nora, however, had not come in to gossip. She was in a white heat.

'Father!—we ought not to let Connie furnish her own rooms!'

'But, my dear, who thinks of her doing any such thing? What do you mean?' And Dr. Hooper took his pipe out of his mouth, and stood protesting.

'She's gone out, she and Annette. They slipped out just now when Mother came in to you; and I'm certain they've gone to B.'s—the excited girl named a well-known Oxford furniture shop—'to buy all sorts of things.'

'Well, after all, it's my house!' said the Reader, smiling. 'Connie will have to ask my leave first.'

'Oh, she'll persuade you!' cried Nora, standing before her father, with her hands behind her. 'She'll make us all do what she wants. She'll be like a cuckoo in the nest. She'll be too strong for us.'

Ewen Hooper put out a soothing hand, and patted his youngest daughter on the shoulder.

'Wait a bit, my dear. And when Connie comes back just ask her to step in here a moment. And now will you both please be gone—at once?—quick march!'

And taking his wife and daughter by the shoulders, he turned them both forcibly out, and sat down to make his final preparations for a lecture that afternoon on the 'feminism' of Euripides.

Meanwhile Connie Bledlow and her maid were walking quickly down the Broad towards the busy Cornmarket with its shops. It was a brilliant morning—one of those east-wind days when all cloud is swept from the air, and every colour of the spring burns and flashes in the sun. Every outline was clear; every new-leaved tree stood radiant in the bright air. The grey or black college walls had lost all the grimness of winter, they were there merely to bring out the blue of the sky, the yellow gold of the laburnums, the tossing white of the chestnuts. The figures, even, passing in the streets, seemed to glitter with the trees and the buildings. The white in the women's dresses; the short black gowns and square caps of the undergraduates; the gay colours in the children's frocks; the overhanging masses of hawthorn and lilac that here and there thrust themselves, effervescent and rebellious, through and over college walls:—everything shimmered and shone in the May sunlight. The air too was tonic and gay, a rare thing for Oxford; and Connie, refreshed by sleep, walked with such a buoyant and swinging step that her stout maid could hardly keep up with her. Many a passer-by observed her. Men on their way to lecture, with battered caps and gowns slung round their necks, threw sharp glances at the tall girl in black, with the small pale face, so delicately alive, and the dark eyes that laughed—aloof and unabashed—at all they saw.

'What boys they are!' said Constance presently, making a contemptuous lip. 'They ought to be still in the nursery.'

'What—the young men in the caps, my lady?'

'Those are the undergraduates, Annette—the boys who live in the colleges.'

'They don't stare like the Italian young gentlemen,' said Annette, shrugging her shoulders. 'Many a time I wanted to box *their* ears for the way they look at you in the street.'

Connie laughed. 'I liked it! They were better-looking than these boys. Annette, do you remember that day two years ago when I took you to that riding competition—what did they call it?—that gymkhana—in the Villa Borghese—and we saw all those young officers and their horses? What glorious fellows they were, most of them! and how they rode!'

Her brown cheek flushed to the recollection. For a moment the Oxford street passed out of sight. She saw the grassy slopes, the stone pines, the white walls, the classic stadium of the Villa Borghese, with the hot June sun stabbing the open spaces, and the deep shadows under the ilexes; and in front of the picture, the crowd of jostling horses, with their riders, bearing the historic names of Rome—Colonnas, Orsinis, Gaetanis, Odescalchis, and the rest. A young and splendid brood, all arrogant life and gaiety, as high-mettled as their English and Irish horses. And, in front, a tall, long-limbed cavalry officer in the Queen's household, bowing to Constance Bledlow, as he comes back, breathless and radiant from the race he has just won, his hand light upon the reins, his athlete's body swaying to each motion of his horse, his black eyes laughing into hers—Why, she had imagined herself in love with him for a whole week!

Then, suddenly, she perceived that in her absence of mind she was running straight into a trio of undergraduates who were hurriedly stepping off the path to avoid her. They looked at her, and she at them. They seemed to her all undersized, plain and sallow. They carried books, and two wore glasses. 'Those are what *he* used to call "smugs!"' she thought, contemptuously, her imagination still full of the laughing Italian youths, on their glistening horses. And she began to make further disparaging remarks about English young men to Annette. If this intermittent stream of youths represented them, the English *gioventù* was not much to boast of.

Next a furniture shop appeared, with wide windows, and a tempting array of wares, and in they went. Constance had soon bought a wardrobe and a cheval-glass for herself, an armchair, a carpet, and a smaller wardrobe for Annette, and seeing a few trifles, like a French screen, a small sofa, and an inlaid writing-table in her path, she threw them in. Then it occurred to her that Uncle

Ewen might have something to say to these transactions, and she hastily told the shopman not to send the things to Medburn Hall till she gave the order.

Out they went, this time into the crowded Cornmarket, where there were no colleges, and where the town that was famous long before the University began, seemed to be living its own vigorous life, untrammelled by the men in gowns. Only in seeming, however, for in truth every single shop in the street depended upon the University.

They walked on into the town, looking into various colleges, sitting in the Broad Walk, and loitering over shops, till one o'clock struck from Oxford's many towers.

'Heavens!' said Constance—'and lunch is at 1.15!'

They turned and walked rapidly along the 'Corn,' which was once more full of men hurrying back to their own colleges from the lecture rooms of Balliol and St. John's. Now, it seemed to Constance that the men they passed were of a finer race. She noticed plenty of tall fellows, with broad shoulders, and the look of keen-bitten health.

'Look at that pair coming!' she said to Annette. 'That's better!'

The next moment, she stopped, confused, eyes wide, lips parted. For the taller of the two had taken off his cap, and stood towering and smiling in her path. A young man, of about six-foot-three, magnificently made, thin with the leanness of an athlete in training,—health, power, self-confidence, breathing from his joyous looks and movements:—was surveying her. His lifted cap showed a fine head covered with thick brown curls. The face was long, yet not narrow; the cheek-bones rather high, the chin conspicuous. The eyes—greyish blue—and heavily lidded—were set forward, under strongly marked eyebrows; and both they, the straight nose with its close nostrils, and the red mouth, seemed to be drawn in firm yet subtle strokes on the sunburnt skin, as certain Dutch and Italian painters define the features of their sitters in a containing outline, as delicate as it is unfaltering. The aspect of this striking person was that of a young king of men, careless, audacious, good-humoured; and Constance Bledlow's expression, as she held out her hand to him, betrayed, much against her will, that she was not indifferent to the sight of him.

'Well met, indeed!' said the young man, the gaiety in his look, a gaiety full of meaning, measuring itself against the

momentary confusion in hers. 'I have been hoping to hear of you for a long time, Lady Constance! Are you with the—the Hoopers—is it?'

'I am staying with my uncle and aunt. I only arrived yesterday.' The girl's manner had become, in a few seconds, little less than repellent.

'Well, Oxford's lively. You'll find lots going on. The Eights begin the day after to-morrow, and I've got my people coming up. I hope you'll let Mrs. Hooper bring you to tea to meet them? Oh, by the way, do you know Meyrick? I think you must have met him.' He turned to his companion, a fair-haired giant, evidently his junior. 'Lord Meyrick—Lady Constance Bledlow.—Will you come, Lady Connie?'

'I don't know what my aunt's engagements are,' said Constance, stiffly.

The trio had withdrawn into the shade of a wide doorway belonging to an old Oxford inn. Annette was looking at the windows of the milliner's shop next door.

'My mother shall do everything that is polite—everything in the world! And when may I come to call? You have no faith in my manners, I know!' laughed the young man. 'How you did sit upon me at Cannes!' And again his brilliant eyes, fixed upon her, seemed to be saying all sorts of unspoken things.

'How has he been behaving lately?' said Constance drily, turning to Lord Meyrick, who stood grinning.

'Just as usual. He's generally mad. Don't depend on him for anything. But I hope you'll let me do anything I can for you! I should be only too happy.'

The girl perceived the eager admiration with which the young fellow was regarding her, and her face relaxed.

'Thank you very much. Of course I know all about Mr. Falloden! At Cannes, we made a league to keep him in order.'

Falloden protested vehemently that he had been a persecuted victim at Cannes, the butt of Lady Connie and all her friends.

Constance, however, cut the speech short by a careless nod and good-bye, beckoned to Annette and was moving away, when he placed himself before her.

'But I hope we shall meet this very night—shan't we?—at the Vice-Chancellor's party?'

'I don't know.'

'Oh, but of course you will be there! The Hoopers are quite

sure to bring you. It's at St. Columba's. Some old swell is coming down. The gardens are terribly romantic—and there'll be a moon. One can get away from all the stuffy people. Do come !'

He gave her a daring look.

'Good-bye,' said Constance again, with a slight decided gesture, which made him move out of her way.

In a few moments, she and her maid were lost to sight on the crowded pavement.

Falloden threw back his head and laughed, as he and Lord Meyrick pursued the opposite direction. But he said nothing. Meyrick, his junior by two years, who was now his most intimate friend in the 'Varsity, ventured at last on the remark—

'Very good-looking ! But she was certainly not very civil to you, Duggy !'

Falloden flushed hotly.

'You think she dislikes me ? I'll bet you anything you please, she'll be at the party to-night.'

Constance and her maid hurried home along the Broad. The girl perceived little or nothing on the way ; but her face was crossed by a multitude of expressions, which meant a very active brain. Perhaps sarcasm or scorn prevailed ; yet mingled, sometimes, with distress or perplexity.

The sight of the low gabled front of Medburn Hall recalled her thoughts. She remembered her purchases and Nora's disapproving eyes. It would be better to go and beard her uncle at once. But just as she approached the house, she became aware of a slenderly built man in flannels coming out of the gates of St. Cyprian's, the college which stood next door to the Hoopers.

He saw her, stopped with a start of pleasure, and came eagerly towards her.

'Lady Constance ! Where *have* you sprung from ? Oh, I know—you are with the Hoopers ! Have you been here long ?'

They shook hands, and Constance obediently answered the newcomer's questions. She seemed indeed to like answering them, and nothing could have been more courteous and kind than his manner of asking them. He was clearly a senior man, a don, who, after a strenuous morning of lecturing, was hurrying—in this festal Eights week—to meet some friends on the river. His face was one of singular charm, the features regular, the skin a pale olive, the hair and eyes intensely black. Whereas Falloden's

features seemed to lie, so to speak, on the surface, the mouth and eyes scarcely disturbing the general level of the face mask—no indentation in the chin, and no perceptible hollow under the brow,—this man's eyes were deeply sunk, and every outline of the face—cheeks, chin and temples—chiselled and fined away, into an almost classical perfection. The man's aspect indeed was Greek, and ought only to have expressed the Greek blitheness, the Greek joy in life. But, in truth, it was a very modern and complex soul that breathed from both face and form.

Constance had addressed him as 'Mr. Sorell.' He turned to walk with her to her door, talking eagerly. He was asking her about various friends in whose company they had last met—apparently at Rome; and he made various references to 'your mother,' which Constance accepted gently, as though they pleased her.

They paused at the Hoopers' door.

'But when can I see you?' he asked. 'Has Mrs. Hooper a day at home? Will you come to lunch with me soon? I should like to show you my rooms. I have some of those nice things we bought at Syracuse—your father and I—do you remember? And I have a jolly look out over the garden. When will you come?'

'When you like. But chaperons seem to be necessary!'

'Oh, I can provide one—any number! Some of the wives of our married Fellows are great friends of mine. I should like you to know them. But wouldn't Mrs. Hooper bring you?'

'Will you write to her?'

He looked a little confused.

'Of course I know your uncle very well. He and I work together in many things. May I come and call?'

'Of course you may!' She laughed again, with that wilful sound in the laugh which he remembered. He wondered how she was going to get on at the Hoopers'. Mrs. Hooper's idiosyncrasies were very generally known. He himself had always given both Mrs. Hooper and her eldest daughter a wide berth in the social gatherings of Oxford. He frankly thought Mrs. Hooper odious, and had long since classed Miss Alice as a stupid little thing with a mild talent for flirtation.

Then, as he held out his hand to say good-bye, he suddenly remembered the Vice-Chancellor's party.

'By the way, there's a big function to-night. You're going,

of course? Oh yes—make them take you! I hadn't meant to go—but now I shall—on the chance!

He grasped her hand, holding it a little. Then he was gone, and the Hoopers' front door swung suddenly wide, opened by some one invisible.

Connie, a little flushed and excited, stepped into the hall; and there perceived Mrs. Hooper behind the door.

'You are rather late, Constance,' said that lady coldly. 'But, of course, it doesn't matter. The servants are at their dinner still, so I opened the door. So you know Mr. Sorell?'

From which Constance perceived that her aunt had observed her approach to the house, in Mr. Sorell's company, through the little side window of the hall. She straightened her shoulders impatiently.

'My father and mother knew him in Rome, Aunt Ellen. He used to come to our apartment. Is Uncle Ewen in the study? I want to speak to him.'

She knocked and went in. Standing with her back to the door she said abruptly—

'I hope you won't mind, Uncle Ewen, but I've been buying a few things we want, for my room and Annette's. When I go, of course they can be turned out. But may I tell the shop now to send them in?'

The Reader turned in some embarrassment, his spectacles on his nose.

'My dear girl, anything to make you comfortable! But I wish you had consulted me. Of course, we would have got anything you really wanted.'

'Oh, that would have been dreadfully unfair!' laughed Constance. 'It's my fault, you see. I've got far too many dresses. One seemed not to be able to do without them at Cannes.'

'Well, you won't want so many here,' said Dr. Ewen cheerfully, as he rose from his table crowded with books. 'We're all pretty simple at Oxford. We ought to be of course—even our guests. It's a place of training—*ἀσκησις*.' He dropped the Greek word absently, putting away his papers the while, and thinking of the subject with which he had just been busy. Constance opened the door again to make her escape, but the sound recalled Dr. Ewen's thoughts:—

'My dear—has your aunt asked you? We hope you'll come with us to the Vice-Chancellor's party to-night. I think it would

interest you. After all, Oxford's not like other places. I think you said last night, you knew some undergraduates——'

'I know Mr. Falloiden, of Marmion,' said Constance, 'and Mr. Sorell.'

The Reader's countenance broke into smiles.

'Sorell? The dearest fellow in the world! He and I help each other a good deal, though of course we differ—and fight—sometimes. But that's the salt of life. Yes, I remember, your mother used to mention Sorell in her letters. Well, with those two, and ourselves, you'll have plenty of starting-points. Ah, luncheon!' For the bell rang, and sent Constance hurrying upstairs to take off her things.

As she washed her hands, her thoughts were very busy with the incidents of her morning's walk. The colours had suddenly freshened in the Oxford world. No doubt she had expected them to freshen; but hardly so soon. A tide of life welled up in her,—a tide of pleasure. And as she stood a moment beside the open window of her room before going down, looking at the old Oxford garden just beneath her, and the stately College front beyond, Oxford itself began to capture her, touching her magically, insensibly, as it had touched the countless generations before her. She was the child of two scholars, and she had been brought up in a society both learned and cosmopolitan, traversed by all the main currents and personalities of European politics, but passionate all the same for the latest find in the Forum, the newest guesses in criticism, for any fresh light that the present could shed upon the past. And when she looked back upon the moments of those Roman years which had made the sharpest mark upon her, she saw three figures stand out—her gracious and graceful mother—her father, student and aristocrat, so eagerly occupied with life that he had scarcely found the time to die—and Mr. Sorell, her mother's friend, and then her own. Together—all four—they had gone to visit the Etruscan tombs about Viterbo, they had explored Norba and Ninfa, and had spent a marvellous month at Syracuse.

'And I have never seen him since papa's death!—and I have only heard from him twice. I wonder why?' She pondered it resentfully. And yet what cause of offence had she? At Cannes, had she thought much about him? In that scene, so troubled and feverish, compared with the old Roman days, there had been for her, as she well knew, quite another dominating figure.

'Just the same!' she thought angrily. 'Just as domineering—and provoking. Boggling about Uncle Ewen's name, as if it was not worth his remembering! I shall compel him to be civil to my relations, just because it will annoy him so much.'

At lunch, Constance declared prettily that she would be delighted to go to the Vice-Chancellor's party. Nora sat silent through the meal.

After lunch, Connie went to talk to her aunt about the incoming furniture. Mrs. Hooper made no difficulties at all. The house had long wanted these additions, only there had been no money to buy them with. Now Mrs. Hooper felt secretly certain that Constance, when she left them, would not want to take the things with her, so that she looked on Connie's purchases of the morning as her own prospective property.

A furniture van appeared early in the afternoon with the things. Nora hovered about the hall, severely dumb, while they were being carried upstairs. Annette gave all the directions.

But when later on Connie was sitting at her new writing-table contemplating her transformed room with a childish satisfaction, Nora knocked and came in.

She walked up to Connie, and stood looking down upon her. She was very red, and her eyes sparkled.

'I want to tell you that I am disappointed in you—dreadfully disappointed in you!' said the girl fiercely.

'What do you mean?' Constance rose in amazement.

'Why didn't you insist on my father's buying these things? You ought to have insisted. You pay us a large sum and you had a right. Instead, you have humiliated us—because you are rich,—and we are poor! It was mean—and purse-proud.'

'How dare you say such things?' cried Connie. 'You mustn't come into my room at all, if you are going to behave like this. You know very well I didn't do it unkindly. It is you who are unkind! But of course it doesn't matter. You don't understand. You are only a child!' Her voice shook.

'I am not a child!' said Nora indignantly. 'And I believe I know a great deal more about money than you do—because you have never been poor. I have to keep all the accounts here, and make mother and Alice pay their debts. Father, of course, is always too busy to think of such things. Your money is *dreadfully* useful to us. I wish it wasn't. But I wanted to do what was honest

—if you had only given me time. Then you slipped out, and did it!’

Constance stared in bewilderment.

‘Are you the mistress in this house?’ she said.

Nora nodded. Her colour had all faded away, and her breath was coming quick. ‘I practically am,’ she said stoutly.

‘At seventeen?’ asked Connie, ironically.

Nora nodded again.

Connie turned away, and walked to the window. She was enraged with Nora, whose attack upon her seemed quite inexplicable, and incredible. Then, all in a moment, a bitter forlornness overcame her. Nora, standing by the table, and already pierced with remorse, saw her cousin’s large eyes fill with tears. Connie sat down, with her face averted. But Nora—trembling all over—perceived that she was crying. The next moment, the newcomer found Nora kneeling beside her, in the depths of humiliation and repentance.

‘I am a beast!—a horrid beast! I always am. Oh, please, please don’t cry!’

‘You forget’—said Connie, with difficulty—‘how I—how I miss my mother!’

And she broke into a fit of weeping. Nora, beside herself with self-disgust, held her cousin embraced, and tried to comfort her. And presently, after an agitated half-hour, each girl seemed to herself to have found a friend. Reserve had broken; they had poured out confidences to each other; and after the thunder and the shower came the rainbow of peace.

Before Nora departed, she looked respectfully at the beautiful dress of white satin, draped with black, which Annette had laid out upon the bed in readiness for the Vice-Chancellor’s party.

‘It will suit you perfectly!’ she said, still eager to make up. Then—eyeing Constance—

‘You know, of course, that you are good-looking?’

‘I am not hideous—I know that,’ said Constance, laughing. ‘You odd girl!’

‘We have heard often how you were admired in Rome. I wonder—don’t be offended!’—said Nora bluntly—‘have you ever been in love?’

‘Never!’ The reply was passionately prompt.

Nora looked thoughtful.

'Perhaps you don't know whether you were or not. Girls get so dreadfully mixed up. But I am sure people—men—have been in love with you.'

'Well, of course!' said Connie, with the same emphatic gaiety.

Nora opened her eyes.

"Of course?" But I know heaps of girls with whom nobody has ever been in love!'

As soon as she was alone, Connie locked her door, and walked restlessly up and down her room, till by sheer movement she had tamed a certain wild spirit within her, let loose by Nora's question. And as she walked, the grey Oxford walls, the Oxford lilacs and laburnums, vanished from perception. She was in another scene. Hot sun—gleaming orange-gardens and blue sea—bare-footed, black-eyed children—and a man beside her, on whom she has been showering epithets that would have shamed—surely!—any other human being in the world. Tears of excitement are in her eyes; in his a laughing triumph mixed with astonishment.

'But, now—' she thinks, drawing herself up, erect and tense, her hands behind her head; 'now, I am ready for him. Let him try such ways again—if he dare!'

(To be continued.)

THE HUMOUR OF THACKERAY.

BY THE RT. REV. BISHOP FRODSHAM, D.D.

THE connection between William Makepeace Thackeray and the CORNHILL MAGAZINE was so close that it would be almost indecent to publish any new discoveries with regard to his work through another channel. If Thackeray was not the father of CORNHILL, at any rate it was under his care that it came into the world on January 1, 1860, with what was then the phenomenal first issue of 100,000 copies.

Three letters that hitherto have not been published came to light this year. Their history is as follows: The novelist when he was a boy of fourteen or fifteen met at the house of his step-father, Major Carmichael Smyth, near Ottery St. Mary, two small Exeter cousins Louisa and Elizabeth Powell. Their mother was a daughter of Henry Cort, the 'the Father of the British Iron Trade.' The girls were some six or seven years younger than their kinsman, but the children struck up a friendship that lasted through their lives. Mrs. Phipson—*née* Elizabeth Powell—used to show as her most valued possession some sketches made for her by her boy friend. She also used to tell many stories of his kindness towards her. It was he who 'made her stop sucking her thumb,' a big event to a young lady of eight. Once she played 'too earnestly' with the spigot of the great rain-barrel, in which the water was stored for the Larkbeare garden. The water gushed out suddenly, pinning to the ground the young experimenter in hydrostatics helpless, scared, and half-drowned. Thackeray dragged her out, but for a few seconds before doing so, he was overwhelmed by laughter. These insignificant incidents have some bearing upon the novelist's peculiar humour. The daughter of his little friend, Miss Annie Cort Phipson, produced last month the third letter contained in this article. It is in a yellow envelope endorsed 'Thackeray's last letter to me L.C.' Louisa Powell, to whom the initials refer, married in 1840 the famous biologist William Benjamin Carpenter. The two first letters were preserved by her, together with a large number of other letters from Early Victorian notabilities, and passed into the hands of her son, my brother-in-law, Mr. T. A. Carpenter of Ilkley, on the death of his elder brother Forbes. At my request Mr. Carpenter allowed

me to give to the readers of the CORNHILL MAGAZINE two letters that display the humour of Thackeray in a pleasing light.

The letters, through a pernicious custom that is not yet dead, are dated only with the day of the month, but they were written from 88 St. James Street, which gives approximately the year. Thackeray lived in St. James Street from 1843 onwards, so this may be regarded as the approximate date of the letters. From internal evidence it would appear that Mrs. Carpenter had written to ask her cousin to dinner, and in doing so had bantered him by saying that it had been reported to her that he was afraid of her husband, whom the 'Dictionary of National Biography' describes as being 'spare, keen-eyed, and tenacious looking.' She also appears to have referred to the modest 'joint of mutton and any pretty little kickshaws' he might expect at her house. Thackeray rose to the fly, and instead of answering his cousin direct sent a mock challenge to her husband.

'88 St. James St.,

'Tuesday, 24th May [March].

'DEAR DOCTOR CARPENTER,—I have received a most extraordinary and painful letter from Mrs. Carpenter which, coming from a relative and an old friend, has deeply annoyed and astonished me. As Mrs. Carpenter's letter contains a direct and cruel imputation as to my courage, it is from her husband and not from the Lady directly that I am compelled to demand a remedy.

'Mrs. Carpenter plainly states that some persons (whom I stigmatise as *malignant slanderers*) have stated that *I was afraid of you*. Has my conduct ever given occasion for such a calumny? Have you ever threatened me personally, and if you have, am I, or am I not bigger than you I ask; and when did I betray any sign of terror? Was it when we dined at Mrs. Evans's? I was afraid of Mrs. Chambers I confess; but of no other man in company.

'Under such a charge there are two ways open to me to show that I am not the poltroon which my enemies have declared me to be.

'1. We may have a meeting in which case I refer you to my friend Major Goliath Gahagan, K.I.F., K.I.S. (of the British Auxiliary Legion), who is to be found breakfasting any day between 4 and 6 at the Army and Navy Club; or

'2. I can present myself at your house; shake your hand heartily without a tremor, and prove by an easy and unconcerned behaviour during the course of dinner, that I am ready to face you with a carving knife or any other weapon.

'There is a cruel allusion in Mrs. Carpenter's letter (which perhaps you did not see, but for which, as a husband, you are answerable), an allusion to *Mutton*.

'She asks satirically if I can eat it ?

'If this sarcastic query refers to a report that I and Mr. Frederick Mullett Evans ate a shoulder of mutton between us with baked potatoes, and I believe, onion sauce, I can only say that he had the largest half, but that I am not ashamed of my known partiality for mutton ; and will show it any day ; upon any joint roast or boiled, from a haunch down to a scrag.

'I must ask all this week to fulfil imperative engagements and to wind up my affairs ; but I shall be free to meet you on Wednesday the 1st of April at any hour you may appoint.

'Remember however I am not the challenger, you have wished the meeting ; and it is not my fault if BLOOD shall be shed between us, as it certainly will be if the mutton is underdone.

'I have the honour to be, sir,

'W. M. THACKERAY.'

This is delightful banter containing not a solitary note of irony or cynicism. One can almost catch the echo of Thackeray's great laugh as he visualised the two contingencies. The eminent scientist 'with somewhat formal manners' seeking Major Goliah O'Grady Gahagan, K.I.F., K.I.S., at his breakfast in the late afternoon, or, better still, the gallant major riding up the respectable streets of Hampstead, towards the Carpenters' house, 'on a black horse looking like Mars.' Depend upon it he followed the matter up in his mind, and saw the frightened maid going up the stairs bearing in her hand this card :

MAJOR GOLIAH O'GRADY GAHAGAN, H.E.I.C.S.

Commanding Battalion of
Irregular Horse

Ahmednuggar

He saw a vision clad in loose scarlet and red morocco boots, a scarlet jacket, a shawl of the same colour round his waist, a scarlet turban three feet high decorated with a tuft of scarlet flamingo feathers, bearing a pirate badge in silver on the front of his turban, and armed with a brace of pistols, a Malay creese, and a tulwar sharp on both sides and nearly six feet in length. Of what sort would be a duel conducted by such an experienced second ? When as a Cornet the brave Goliah O'Grady Gahagan fought Ensign

Hicks for the favours of the fair Miss Jowler, Ensign Hicks received a ball in his jaw, and was half-choked by a quantity of carrotty whisker forced down his jaw by the ball ! The second contingency raised by Thackeray needs no comment, except that it is almost boyish in its spontaneous merriment. He certainly had some good reason for swaggering about his height. It was six feet three inches !

It is characteristic of Thackeray that his conscience accused him of having mistaken *ὑβρις* for wit. Two days later he wrote the following penitent letter :

' 88 St. James St.,
' Thursday, 26th March.

' MY DEAR MRS. CARPENTER,—Remorse came over me after I had sent my challenge to Dr. Carpenter, and I thought first, that it was a bad joke, second that such a kind letter as you wrote me ought to be answered immediately and respectfully and not with any attempt at waggery good or bad.

' This comes to say plainly that I am very happy indeed that you wrote to me ; and shall be delighted to renew an old connection ; it will give me the greatest pleasure to know Dr. Carpenter, and I had rather be asked to your family dinner than to the very finest banquet you could possibly devise for me.

' I asked you to let me come on Wednesday. If you have asked no others, and another day will do as well, Thursday or Friday, say, may I come on either of those days in preference ? For the fact is that last night at a great assembly a Lord came up, and asked me point blank to dinner on Wednesday ; which honour so confused me, that I forgot I had an engagement and said I would come. That is the real case. But if you have asked other people, and made arrangements nothing will be more easy for me than to give my Lord the slip.

' Most truly, dear Mrs. Carpenter, yours,

' W. M. THACKERAY.

' As I am writing this the enclosed arrives. What am I to do ?

' " To remind.

' " Lord Morpeth expects the honour of Mr. Thackeray's company at dinner on Wednesday the 1st April at quarter past seven."

The third letter is pitched in quite a different key. Mrs. Carpenter would be the first to appreciate and forgive his refusal of her request. This letter again is dated only with the day of the month, May 15, but it was written from Onslow Square, whither Thackeray removed from Green Street, Kensington, in 1853. In 1861 he moved thence to Palace Green. This gives the approximate date of the following and last letter to his cousin.

' 36 Onalow Square, S.W.,

May 15th.

'DEAR MRS. CARPENTER,—I ask pardon for not having answered you sooner. Your note came in one of my fits of illness when I hardly know what happens; and reproaches me this morning among a heap of reminders of similar debts to pay.

'I was applied to by another party from Leeds, and made no answer. To you I hope I may say in private that I don't like the autograph mongering system at all. It forces a man to assume a posture of vanity, by no means becoming to him. Who am I to go for to say that my handwriting is worth a shilling? You will let me off the autograph, please, and believe me,

'Very faithfully yours,

'W. M. THACKERAY.'

The mock challenge and the repentant apology do not form alone any adequate basis upon which to erect a new theory of Thackeray's humour. They throw, however, a valuable sidelight upon the subject. They make it a little more difficult for those who make much of the novelist's supposed cynicism to maintain their ground. It has been said so often that the great novelist's humour was spoiled by irony that many take it for granted this is a full statement of the case. They fail to observe how deep are the sources of natural laughter contained in his books. Thackeray was infected by national virtues as well as by national limitations. The English demand from all their jesters that they shall faithfully deal with life, not so much in its transitory interests as in its deep and abiding contrasts. Our national humour is often too deep for any outward manifestation. It moves both to laughter and to tears, for tears and laughter are never very far apart. The most serious things in life are those in which abide the deepest incongruities. This seems to be the spirit that moved Thackeray, as it did that great master of English humour William Shakespeare.

We are on safe ground if we trust in the sincerity of the words with which Thackeray commenced his famous lectures on the English Humorists. 'The humorous writer should more than appeal to our mere sense of ridicule. He professes to awaken and direct your love, your pity, your kindness; your scorn for untruth, pretension, imposture; your tenderness for the weak, the poor, the oppressed, the unhappy. He takes upon himself to be the weekday preacher so to speak. Accordingly as he finds, and speaks, and feels the truth best, we regard him, esteem him—and sometimes love him.' When all is said and done Thackeray's appeal to English men rests not upon superficial cynicism, but upon its kindly human feeling towards a world full of inconsistencies and contrasts.

FRANCE.

I.

'FRENCH frivolous!' It was the one comment to show that Frank had been marked among other small fry as an individual. The rest was perfunctory: Latin, History, Greek, 'Fair,' 'Very fair,' 'Satisfactory.'

Dick was writing to the boy when the dâk-runner appeared in the door of the hut with his weekly budget. He had been telling him how one of his new log-rollers had unlocked a stack of timber in the rapids, diving under a rock in peril of his life to find the master plank which held the pile back. He was thinking how he might bring Marguerite into his letter when the post came. Frank had never known his mother, and he wished him to think of her. For him to have known Marguerite would have been as good as a religion. Most of his letters had some reference to her. He himself had only seen the boy three times in the last ten years, for a few weeks in the winter, hurried visits when the snow filled the valleys where his pines and deodars stood.

Cunningham smiled half sadly, thinking of his own days. 'Froggy' used to say, 'You Cooning-hum, do me fotty lines.' The lines were never done. Froggy was irascible, but he could not make the smallest boy do his impositions, and in the end retribution was vicarious. You were reported among a batch of the worst offenders, which meant Saturday afternoon in 'Impot School' or a 'swishing.' All French people were ridiculous to the schoolboy of those days, their language absurd and their literature childish when it was not indecent. Sometimes a boy came from a French environment. He had to be careful. If he had a decent accent, could roll a sufficient 'r,' mind his 'y's' and 'en's' or come out with a casual subjunctive, he was in danger of a 'coup derrière.' Of course, if he were French, it was all right; one made allowances.

Guillestre, the 'Froggy' of Melton in the eighties, was a thin grey old man in a perpetual frock coat, ineffectual and peevish, and in the class-room like a bee on a window-pane. He must have hated boys. Cunningham remembered his exasperated 'Barbares!' and the bleat that followed from the class, 'Baa baa,

baa baa, when somebody got up and asked 'Is that the French for sheep, sir?' What boy is conscious of pathos? Years afterwards, when the little man was dead, Cunningham had come upon a volume of literary essays and the autobiography of a French teacher in England by François Guillestre. The book was pure salt, a prose poem infinitely sad but without bitterness. Monsieur had been a political exile from Nancy—it was pronounced at Melton like the name of the milkmaid in the English song; there was a tradition that he had fought a duel and killed his man. To Dick reading between the lines it was clear that Froggy could have opened out unsuspected avenues of life to an intelligent sixth-form boy, unbarred windows in his soul, and let in all the beauties of old France. But Melton was unimaginative. It was not that Cunningham had been unperceptive so much as unawake. Scott held him, and Dumas, and little things like Xenophon crying out 'Thalatta! Thalatta!' or Lesbia's sparrows, or Æneas in the underworld. He was tossed on the high waves with Ovid in the ship that carried him to Tomi. Those lines in the *Fasti* haunted him. He could share the Roman exile's wretchedness though his sympathy was never touched by the baiting of Guillestre.

Certain pores were open to suggestion; others closed. No master ever tried to widen these or to clear new approaches. Only one tried to make him work. That was in the middle Fifth, where, overawed by a relentless disciplinarian, a fanatic in drilled prosaic efficiency, he had taken the class in a term's leap. Perhaps it was as well that the disciplinarian disliked modern languages: here at least there was no one to rub off the bloom. If any Melton boy were destined in his maturer years to fall under the spell of France, he would find the rose on her lips and the light undimmed in her eyes. In the meantime she was a country created for the entertainment of English schoolboys, the butt of other lands, with a history nicely contrived to glorify the exploits of one's own people. At fifteen he had stayed a night with his father in Paris on the way to Zermatt. He sent a postcard to his sister Jocelyn, telling her 'how funny the froggies were.' It was all a huge joke. When his father let him loose to find his bearings he boarded a tram marked 'Bastille.' Deposited in the empty Place, he had wit enough to save his face by crying, 'A bas la Bastille!' before anyone had time to remind him how it had been destroyed. This glimpse of France did not destroy its unreality.

After six years at a public school and a year at Cambridge,

Cunningham had had to educate himself, and it seemed that Frank was going the same way. He wondered if it had been a mistake to send him to Melton. He had had his misgivings, but he loved the old school; and he had heard that it had been caught up in the wave of efficiency which was agitating the Services of his own generation. It had come into line. Boys were being encouraged to nibble a little at life on their own account. Frank's letter showed that he was very much alive. He pictured him the young barbarian he had been himself at the same age. 'An unawakened ass' was the grown man's comment on his youth.

'You cannot imagine what an unawakened ass I was,' he wrote to his son. 'And at Cambridge too what little intelligence I had must have been dormant. I was going in for the Classical Tripos and had to take French my first year in the Additional. It was either that or mechanics. The course was Taine's "L'Ancien Régime," the plays of Molière, and a paper on grammar. I read all the books aloud with your Aunt Jocelyn. She will laugh when you remind her. Unhappily there was no *viva voce*, so by way of protest I pronounced every word as if it were English. I laughed at France just as you do now, and France has had her revenge on me as she will on you. I have never been able to speak the language intelligibly or to follow it when spoken, though the one gift I would crave of a Fairy dispensing talents would be to speak French like a Frenchman. I remember, when I was your age, going with my father to the theatre in Paris. I was fascinated by the quick speech of the actors, and I said to him, "How well they speak! How clever they are!" and he laughed at me as if I had said something silly; as if it were as easy for a Frenchman to speak French as for an Englishman to speak English. But I did not see it. They seemed to me to be doing a really difficult thing as if it were quite easy. Even now, when I hear a well-bred Frenchwoman speaking her own language, her mastery of it seems to me as much an art as the most delicate touch on the violin. It is the intonation, the undulation, the impulse, rhythm, challenge, the lingering on a syllable, the halting to leap forward, the rapid attack and recoil which is all the difference between poetry and prose. I have never felt the same about other languages, except Italian and Spanish in a less degree. A German or Oriental speaking his mother tongue is merely employing an instrument contrived by somebody else—or so it seems to me—in a workmanlike way of course, while the Frenchman is the very author of the machine. French is an artist's medium, like music, literature, painting; to call forth the grace that is in it needs the plastic touch, and

every intelligent Frenchman is more or less an artist. Your dear mother . . .

Cunningham let the pen slip from his fingers. It was difficult to write to the boy about his mother. He lit his pipe and went out and sat on the verandah steps, thinking what he should say. The colour had not quite left the sky. The tall shaft-like pines that ringed his hut appeared gigantic in the pale moonlight, so that the patch of sky above seemed drawn down to them like an old enamelled Chinese bowl of a faint purplish blue, resting on their tips, or like the ceiling of a domed chancel quaintly embossed. It was the colour of the roof of the church at Chambéry, where he had been with Marguerite. Everything he had seen with her had a peculiar beauty of its own, whether it was a bank of fox-gloves in a lane leading down to a wood, the lichened roof of a barn, a beast, or a flower, or an ancient wall, or the immemorial fragrance of some old church—things revealed to them at the same time as if their oneness lent them a new vision, a kind of mysterious initiation of which Earth was conscious and approved, giving them moments in which they heard the rhythm of life together. It was like having two souls.

He wished now that he had told Frank more about his mother. It was difficult to write. Next year he was going home and he would tell him about Mégasthène and Avignon; he had met Marguerite there. It was the kind of story that would appeal to a boy.

When Cunningham had been a year at Cambridge his father lost his money in a bank failure and he had to go down. It was all very sudden. Instead of going back to Clare in October he was given a second-class ticket to Bombay and fifty pounds. He was to be an assistant on a tea plantation in Cachar, of which his father had been one of the directors. He accepted this change in his life light-heartedly. Cambridge had been Utopia; he was leaving behind many friends, and he was told that he would have no money to spend on himself for years. But there was a credit side to the account. The shadow of examinations was lifted once for all; his aunt had given him a rifle and a new gun; and he looked forward to having two ponies of his own to ride and polo on Sundays. He was delightfully irresponsible. He may have been an unawakened ass, but he was a happy one.

He found himself with six days to spend between Calais and Marseilles. His father had suggested that he should see a little

of Europe before he buried himself in the East. 'You should know more than one capital,' he said, and made a small sacrifice in the spirit in which parents used to send their sons on 'the grand tour.' It was partly out of remorse, partly out of a vague though genuine sense of what he called 'the educative value of travel.' He gave Dick two bank-notes, and it was the best investment for the boy the unimaginative old gentleman ever made.

Dick did not stay forty-eight hours in Paris. The city depressed him. He spent a morning at the Louvre and left it with a peculiar sense of satiety. Then he went to the Morgue, and was disappointed because there was no corpse there. All the afternoon he was looking into shop windows and watching the crowd. After dinner a second-rate music-hall brought his depression to a head. He searched a railway map for a city between Paris and Marseilles and hit upon Avignon. The name seemed picturesque and familiar. He remembered afterwards that he had seen it in a footnote to one of Cæsar's Commentaries.

II.

Dick always thought of his first day at Avignon as the day of his awakening, as if the scales had fallen from his eyes in a moment through some subtle spell cast on him by the Papal city. Probably it was only a phase of adolescence, the bursting of the chrysalis. If it had not been at Avignon it would have been somewhere else. But Dick is convinced that the miracle happened while he was driving from the station to the hotel.

What is the indefinable charm of old France? Half spiritual, half physical, inhaled with the early morning smell of the streets with the fragrance of roasted coffee and cigarettes, the warm seductive exhalations of the *boulangerie*. It is a smell which, if one shuts one's eyes anywhere even in the most prosaic surroundings, will recall narrow, steep, tortuous alleys, coifed market-women selling flowers, deep-roofed houses with garret windows flush with the walls, tumble-down shops clambering on the back of some cathedral like wrack on the hull of an old ship. Dick's first exaltation was purely physical, as one enjoys the grass and flowers on a cliff after a cold plunge in the sea. He had *déjeuner* under the plane trees in the courtyard of his hotel; he had lain half an hour dreaming in his bath and was hungry as a berserker. As a

mere Saxon he had thought of the French as *gourmets*, but he began to see that imagination sanctifies appetite. Every meal was an adventure. Under the planes there was still a slight frosty nip in the air, and the sun's rays creeping through the thin foliage caressed him. It was a perfect atmosphere: the chill of morning melting into the warmth of noon. Every now and then a yellow crinkled leaf fell lazily on to his plate. It was pure autumn; the sky had no cloud. Three days before he had been shivering by the fireside in a Devonshire grange, or walking in the teeth of a high rocking wind that moaned all day.

After *déjeuner* he climbed the hill and sat in the garden of the Palais des Papes, still as a stone, watching the ducks and the nursemaids and children. His walk there filled him with a thirst for new adventure. He loved the warm old sun-baked city, and meant to explore every street and alley of it. He lay in the grass turning over the leaves of a French novel which he had bought at the Librairie near the hotel. He spelt out a paragraph here and there painfully, but with a new zest. For the first time in his life he coveted a dictionary; when he came on a new word he was pleasantly mystified, he could have been happy with 'Froggy': but it was a kind of sport—this chase of an unknown symbol, to track it down and find it applied suggestively in a new way until the full significance dawned on him.

In the first chapter there was a letter from a bookworm to a friend inspired by a new novel of Bourget's which he had read and did not like. Criticism on this led him into much discursive comment on modern French writers, in a way that gave Dick an insight into what peculiar treasure he was likely to find in each. It was written with that suggestion of good hunting which no book-lover can resist. And since *déjeuner* Dick had become a book-lover; it dawned on him that there might be something in French literature which he had missed. The mere titles of the books fascinated him. He scribbled them down, with the names of the authors, on the back of an envelope. There were Gautier, France, Stendhal, Maupassant, Mérimée, Loti, Gérard de Nerval, Balzac, Flaubert: he would read these in Cachar. And being a youth of large impulses, upon which he seldom turned back, he went to the Librairie again and ordered them all. In the meantime there was no more fascinating dictionary, he thought, than a shop window in Avignon. What was the meaning of 'rouennerie, serrurerie, bourrellerie, pépiniériste, vannerie, chapellerie'?

He tried to guess without looking inside. Had the latter anything to do with a hat, or did it concern a place of worship?

The ample-bosomed lady in the Librairie received him with a smile, which increased as the stack of volumes on the counter grew higher. She helped him prettily with the authors' names.

In a moment the volumes were deftly enveloped in thick packing paper and cardboard, and tightly bound with cord.

'Mais comme vous êtes habile!' was Dick's carefully prepared compliment.

'Ça ne fait rien. Voilà!' Madame smiled charmingly. The packet was as large as his kit-bag. It contained, amongst other classics, seven volumes of Chateaubriand's Memoirs and ten of Dumas, at three francs fifty each. A lasting treasure. Dick flattered himself on his economy, feeling that he might have squandered the gold on cabs and theatres and abortive sight-seeing in Paris. He turned back at the door of the shop and bought two more volumes for his pocket, Flaubert's 'Trois Contes' and 'La Rôtisserie de la Reine Pédauque.' Then he asked madame for her card in case he might wish to send her another order from the East. She was happy to have encountered such a *voyageur*. He went off pleased with the success of his French, grateful at last for the discipline of 'L'Ancien Régime.'

He called the carriage and left the bundle at his hotel. Then he drove to Villeneuve-les-Avignon, where he basked on the walls of the Château d'André, looking down on the river. The white, warm old city, with its figs and vines and cypresses and oleanders, made him long to wander in Provence. In the evening the Rhone drew him down to the Jardin de Bertherasse. He lingered there to enjoy the breath of the stream, a strong, sweet-smelling river, with a scent like the sea.

It was dark when he found himself in Avignon again, and he drifted happily into the network of dimly-lighted streets, which kept flinging him up against the enormous walls of the Palais des Papes; sometimes he passed under its flying buttresses. He threaded alleys that led into unexpected gardens, lonely as the desert. Then in the darkness, through the shadow of the planes, the massive back of some great church loomed towards him. He passed through old carved gateways into narrow squares deserted and silent as death. He searched for the street names. How they exuded romance! Often the only light was a

hurricane lantern hanging by a chain from an old porch. He passed the Rue des Trois Faucons, the Impasse des Sept Juifs, the Passage du Panier Fleuri. Who were the seven Jews? He felt sure they had been slain in the Impasse. What was the flowering basket? Was it a Papal miracle? He had a vision of a lady who sat by a window in that quiet street, pale and brooding. The march of life had ceased for her suddenly, and her eyes were always cast down, dwelling on the basket of flowers like Isabella's on her pot of basil. The burghers passing by the entrance of the alley would have a glimpse of the splash of colour on the grey wall, and the impression would linger with them far down the street. In the Rue des Ortolans he had a vision of a lackey of the Marquise de Ganges going to this particular market to buy a skewer of *becfigues* and ortolans for his mistress, but the image was soon blotted out by another of an old man who lived in the corner house where the door-knocker had a gargoyle face, and who would sit over the fire reading his bestiary as he stirred the *marmite*, or peering into the coals for the meagre and spotted salamander, or into the air for sylphs blue or ethereal as a sulphur flame. He found himself by the door of the Chapelle des Pénitents Blancs. Who were the Pénitents Blancs he wondered? There were other chapels, of the Pénitents Noirs and the Pénitents Gris. Who were the Pénitents Noirs? Were they converts? Could they have been Moors? If so, what was the significance of the Pénitents Gris? White, grey, and black perhaps may have been the symbolical colours of sin. One would go for absolution to the Chapelle des Pénitents Blancs if one's sins were white; and no doubt the Pénitents Gris held a middle place in the scale of transgression. Or were they Orders—White Friars, Grey Friars, Black Friars? He hoped not: it was a solution wanting in romance.

He passed the Rue de l'Arc de l'Agneau, the Rue du Crucifix, the Rue des Douleurs, the Rue des Corps Saints, the Rue d'Oriflamme. What devotion, what idealism, what faith! The people who had evolved these beautiful names, he thought, must have a beautiful spirit. He wished to talk with them, to hear their voices. He felt that the voice of a Frenchwoman falling on his ears in that dark mysterious old street just as the last solemn vibration of the chimes died away must convey something to him—something suggestive of the spirit of the place, its old religion, mysticism, faith, something in harmony with his idea of the loving kindness which must linger in the Rue Petit Muguet, the Rue des

Dahlias, the Rue de la Gazelle. He heard footsteps approaching him. There was only one other figure in the street; it was a lady in black with a missal in her hand. They met under the solitary lamp. He lifted his hat.

'Pardon, madame. Can you tell me where is the Chapelle des Pénitents Noirs?'

'No, monsieur. I regret I cannot direct you, but I come now from the Chapelle des Pénitents Blancs.'

Dick lifted his hat apologetically. The lady passed on, she had the air of a *grande dame*; she did not smile. Her graciousness made him feel a boor. He ought not to have disturbed her thoughts, thoughts of devotion perhaps, out of a mere whim. A gentle, devout soul, and a beautiful voice with something of the dove in it, the kind of voice one might expect from the people whose thoughts were preserved in these old street names. A *pénitente blanche*. Certainly, Dick thought, the Pénitents are the colour of their sins.

In the next street he peered through a carved granite porch which must have been the entrance to a chapel or a treasury, or the house of some great *seigneur*. The dim light inside revealed a mean tavern and the shop of a repairer of bicycles. He was trying to read the armorial bearings over the porch when he heard a loud barking down the street. It was in the Rue du Petit Pommier that he came upon the two men hurriedly and silently clipping the dog. One side of the alley was the wall of a garden, and on the other side there was only one door. The place was an *impasse*. It was not likely that anyone would go that way unless it were to see the inhabitants of the miserable hovel, or perhaps to spy on them.

The men looked up quickly and thrust the beast, which was muzzled and growling savagely, back into the shadow of the wall. Dick caught one glimpse of its head as he passed; he thought it was a deer-hound. He noticed that they were standing under a statue of the Virgin in a niche upon which a flicker of light fell from what seemed to be the only window in the alley. As he passed they dragged the dog into the door. A sudden clang of bells from a steeple over his head reminded him of dinner and his hotel.

III.

The night was warm, with just a touch of freshness in it. Dinner was in the courtyard, which was lighted by lamps hanging from the plane trees. Dick ate abstractedly. He was wondering how much of the spirit of France was preserved in the little library he was taking with him to Cachar when he looked up and saw the *Pénitente Blanche*. Her table was partly hidden from his by an orange-tree in a tub. He had already noticed her companion, whose face was turned away from him. The girl had that curve of the neck and shoulders and poise of the head which most imply gentleness. He felt that he had seen a face somewhere not many hours before which conveyed the same exquisite impression of peace, but for the moment he could not remember where. He wished devoutly that the girl would turn round. When at last she rose the other face came back to him; it was Flandrin's 'Jeune Fille' in the Louvre. Perhaps, too, there had been an unconscious suggestion of the *Pénitente Blanche*. They were mother and daughter.

But she was much slenderer than the 'Jeune Fille,' altogether more *svelte*. And there was more vivacity in her face, a lurking humour in ambush. It was through the spirit that she was beautiful. He could see in a glance as she passed that it was the sweetness of her mind which made her carry her head so, and gave her that drooping curve from the neck to the shoulders. It was strange that the spirit should have so moulded the body in a girl of eighteen; or was it a mould prepared for the spirit? Dick's moralisings led him to the theory that in a person happily born body and spirit help each other, growing together as kernel and shell, giving and receiving. But these high abstractions were far from being detached or scientific.

After dinner he looked eagerly for her in the hall, and saw her standing by the bureau with her mother, talking to a servant. They were evidently distressed. He heard the *Pénitente Blanche* call her 'Marguerite.' The English-speaking *concierge* with whom he had been talking in the morning told him that the ladies had lost a dog. He did not know what kind, but it was a very valuable dog; he believed it was 'employed in the chase.' There was reason to fear a theft.

Dick went straight to Marguerite. He felt that she was unhappy and that he could help her.

'Pardon, mademoiselle,' he said, 'mais avez-voo purdoo ern sheen ?'

She looked at him with a slightly heightened colour.

'I'm sor-ry,' she said slowly, 'I don't speak Eenglish. I understand a little.' Then, as his meaning dawned on her, she added in French, 'Forgive me, monsieur; I did not understand. Yes, it is true. We have lost our dog Mégasthène.'

Dick's sense that he was their *deus ex machina* gave him courage.

'Aysqueel est ern sheen de chasse?' he said. 'Eel chasse les serfs, n'est-ce pas?'

'Les œufs!'

'Les cerfs,' Dick corrected himself.

'Ah oui, monsieur. Les cerfs. Vous l'avez vu?'

'Je pons que je l'ai voo depuis oon oore dans ern sanglier.'

'Dans un sanglier, monsieur!'

Marguerite's bewilderment gave him time to delve in the rubbish-heap of dismembered words which he had carried in his mind since 'L'Ancien Régime.' If it were not '*sanglier*' it must be '*sentier*'; the two words had come in the same paragraph. He corrected himself.

'Mais j'ai trompay, je voodrais dire un sentier. Sanglier est un cochon, n'est-ce pas?'

And he burst into a peal of infectious laughter, in which Marguerite joined despite her tearfulness.

'Voolay-voo vennear avec moi maintenong?' he said encouragingly. 'Purtatre je le trouverai pour voo.'

Marguerite disengaged her mother from the servants, whom she was still plying with questions, and explained that the English gentleman had seen Mégasthène a little more than an hour ago, and he had been so kind as to offer to help them to find him.

Madame turned to him without recognition. She thanked him in pretty broken English and sent the man to call a carriage. Dick was disappointed that he had no longer the excuse to exercise his own unashamed jargon.

But Marguerite did not speak English, and as he guided the *cocher* through the still backwaters which he had explored before dinner he felt that he ought to prepare her for the change in Mégasthène's appearance.

'J'ai purr queel est ern poo—comment voo direz—dezabeel.'

Marguerite did not follow.

'Eel a purdoo son habit,' he ventured. But as he spoke he saw the carved granite gateway which led into the tavern and the shop of the repairer of bicycles. He called to the coachman to pull up. 'Voilà le sanglier,' he said with his jolly laugh as he jumped out of the carriage. He was going to give his hand to madame, but stopped, remembering the two ruffianly-looking men.

'It will be better if you stay here,' he said. 'When I open the door call Mégasthène. If he is inside he will run to you.'

He slipped softly down the alley. It had not entered his head to bring anyone with him. He doubted if the two seedy-looking blackguards would put up a fight. He rather hoped they would; a 'scrap' would be fun.

He had not thought it worth while to explain to the ladies why or how he hoped to find Mégasthène in the Rue du Petit Pommier, but his stealthy movements and the sinister look of the place alarmed them. He heard Marguerite say something to her mother. Madame called to him.

'Stop—please stop. Let me call a gendarme.'

But Dick was already under the Virgin in the niche, looking up at the lighted window. He gave the door a gentle tap and in response saw a moving light flicker on the wall opposite; someone was carrying the lamp cautiously across the room to the window. He tapped more loudly, and heard quick, angry talk inside, and the shuffling of feet on the stairs. The deep baying of a hound startled the silence of the street. That was enough: he flung the door open and stood in the room. The two men faced him. One held a lamp. The other measured him, ready to spring, but hesitating; he was short, but thick-set. Dick saw the glint of a knife in his hand. He called softly 'Mégasthène, Mégasthène.' As the great dog strained at his leash, the man made his spring. Dick ducked and guarded the knife-thrust with his left hand; the steel grazed his shoulder; as the man lurched forward he struck him with the full force of his right on the chin. He collapsed against the table; his companion, frightened by the crash, threw the lamp down and bolted through the door. Dick grappled with the man on the floor, who kicked and swore impotently. He knelt on his chest and held him by his throat, waiting events. The knife had fallen out of his reach. He was afraid Marguerite and her mother would come. He felt guilty; he ought to have kept them out of it. It was like him; he never saw ahead. He had made too light of it, longing for any excuse to be with them. Soon he heard

the girl's voice at the door. The whole affair had only taken two minutes.

'Oh, there you are!' he cried as nonchalantly as he could. 'I've got a prisoner. We'll want a gendarme after all. Please don't come in. It is quite dark, and there's such a mess.'

But Marguerite had taken over charge. She told the driver to go back and bring the carriage lamps. Mégasthène, hearing his mistress' soft voice, received new strength. His leap towards her broke the chain.

'Oh, here's Mégasthène,' Dick said; 'he is better than a gendarme.'

Marguerite entered with a lamp, which she held above her head to protect it from the hound's joyful embraces. She paused a moment on the threshold, peering into the dark room like a vestal with a torch directing some rite, a picture of grace and symmetry and purposeful calm. She found Dick in possession, smiling apologetically, astride his foe. She turned to the *cocher*, who followed, and told him to drive off quickly and inform the *gendarmérie*. 'Mother is holding the horse,' she explained to Dick. Then she saw that he was wounded: his sleeve was soaked in blood. She gave a startled cry of distress. 'You are hurt.' Dick protested that it was a mere scratch; he could not feel it. But she insisted on dressing the wound on the spot. 'Let him get up' she said, pointing to the wretched man on the floor. Dick released his throat.

'You must obey,' Marguerite said to him. 'This dog is savage and resentful. He has received hurt at your hands. It is his habit to seize by the gorge. See I hold him lightly by the collar, but if I say the word—' she gently removed the beast's muzzle. Then she picked up the knife and threw it out of the door. 'Now get up and bring me scissors and a little thread and a needle. You will find them in the *armoire* there, no doubt. Lay them on the table.'

The man obeyed sulkily, eyeing Mégasthène.

'Sit down on the stool under the clock. Do not budge.'

Here madame entered. She received the impression of the squalid interior, the dirt, Dick's bloodstains, and the half-paralysed ruffian on the stool with the same gentle, sympathetic resourcefulness. Between them they applied first aid; Dick's shirt-sleeve served as a temporary bandage. He felt hugely guilty and yet at the same time impenitently happy. He made what amends

he could for the situation he had brought them to by refusing to let into it any hint of melodrama. Poor Mégasthène's lugubrious appearance helped with a little comic relief, and he indulged his perversely execrable French until Marguerite rocked with laughter. Even madame's sad face was wreathed in smiles.

The mesmerised prisoner on the stool was almost forgotten. Soon a fat gendarme arrived, splendidly accoutred, followed by two satellites of meaner habit, who took the wretched man in charge. Madame and monsieur and mademoiselle were requested to make their deposition at the *mairie* in the morning. The gendarme regretted that he must put them to the inconvenience of recording their names. Madame—?

'De la Hunaudaye.'

'And mademoiselle. The same—?'

'Marguerite de la Hunaudaye.'

'And monsieur?'

'Cunningham.'

'Coon-ing-hum,' the man repeated with an accent that made Dick listen for the invariable sequel: 'You Coon-ing-hum, do me fotty lines.'

In the carriage, driving back to the hotel, they were all very silent. Marguerite fondled Mégasthène; the great beast laid his muzzle against her lap. Dick mused happily on his luck. He lay awake half the night musing. The little twinge of pain as his shoulder rubbed against the pillow reminded him of the girl's soft touch—just the tips of her fingers. The deposition would bring them together again in the morning. What luck he had! He was sure that they liked him. And what a beautiful name—'Marguerite de la Hunaudaye.' He had known that she must have a beautiful name. He repeated it again softly, closing his eyes. It was a spell to conjure with; beauty dwelt in it, flowers and honey, the fragrance of thyme, green glades in the forest, the oriflamme, hearts given freely to a cause, fields of bracken and heather, windows in a grey old castle wall overlooking the sea. Surely there must be a Rue de la Hunaudaye somewhere, perhaps in some medieval city of Provence, a quiet dimly lighted street with narrow pavements leading down from the apse of a cathedral to a house which looks as if it had been waiting for centuries, guarding its secret—a house with its upper stories falling over into the street, a porch with a gargoye door-knocker under a Virgin in a niche. 'Pardon, madame,' he muttered, 'can you

tell me where is the Rue de la Hunaudaye ?' He lingered on the syllables softly. They lent freshness to sleep.

IV.

Dick knocked the ashes out of his pipe and went back into the bungalow to his unfinished letter. Reading it over again, he smiled to see how he had been 'drawn' by the Report. He had written like a pedant. It was no good lecturing his son on the value of French. It might perhaps mean more application, but the work would be perfunctory. Frank would call it a 'grind,' and that was not what Dick wanted. The boy must go to France and find out things for himself. Marguerite's brother at Pertuis had often asked for him; Pertuis perhaps might be his Avignon. Dick tore up the last sheet of his letter and wrote in a more matter-of-fact strain.

'I see your French is not up to the mark. As you will have to take it up at Sandhurst your best plan would be to go abroad. I have written to your uncle at Pertuis. He and your cousins wish you to go there. I am sure you will like them. Ask them to take you to Orange and Carpentras and Font de Vaucluse. See Nîmes if you can. You will have to change at Avignon; spend the night there. Put up at the Hôtel Crillon; they will probably give you dinner in the courtyard. You will love exploring the old place. I wish I could be with you. Provence was your mother's country. I have told M. de la Hunaudaye not to let your cousins speak English to you. You must try to pick up a better accent than I had. Your mother used to vow I called a horse a "chevvle," and a "cerf" a "serf," and that I said I had "beaucoup de femmes" when I meant "beaucoup du faim." Instead of tipping the verger at St. Didier I put a franc in the "tronc pour la Vierge." If you make them laugh half as much as I did it will not be a dull house.'

It was to Pertuis that Marguerite and her mother had been going, when Dick walked into their quiet lives as the saviour of the shorn Mégasthène. After the deposition they took him in charge; he was as much one of them as the devoted hound himself. At Nîmes and Orange and Carpentras and Font de Vaucluse he had spent four of the happiest days of his life. To Marguerite the interlude was the most delightful little piece of comedy. She made him talk French: he quite dispelled her idea of the phlegmatic

Englishman. But they had more in common than their high spirits. She was attracted by his *naïf* and indiscriminating reverence for her country. The revelation which had come to him in a single day had flickered before her since she was a child. Marguerite loved history; the poetry of old France was in her blood. But it was Roman Gaul which filled her imagination at the moment. She had been learning English, she explained, that, she might read 'your hard, cold Gibbon.' Marguerite would be watching the bright legions of Tiberius as they filed through the Arc de Triomphe at Orange, or the Carthaginian boy dancing in the amphitheatre of Nîmes, while Dick peopled the streets with his Jules Tournebrosches and his Jérôme Coignards, phantoms evoked from the Rôtisserie de la Reine Pédauque, not without pains and mystification, in the half-hour before sleep.

The warmth and colour of these old cities gave him his first picture of France, a vague and delicious mystery, a glimpse of something beautiful and remote which he carried away with him into the East. It was like a garden in closed walls which he hoped one day to enter, a dream garden into which he could peep for a moment when the wicket was left ajar. Or he would climb up by the ivy roots and peer over the wall. He never saw the same scene—that was half the charm of it—and the wall itself would differ from day to day. Sometimes it was weathered and machicolated; sometimes new and trim and overgrown with wistaria and roses, a screen for intrigue; and then again it would be a broad sun-steeped rampart on to which he could climb easily and lie and bask in the wild lavender as in the Fort of St. André looking down on the Rhone. But then France would recede. It was easier to conjure up Marguerite's legionaries, or the *retarius* flinging his net. If he were ever to find the key to his enchanted garden he believed it would be in some medieval city like Avignon, where the old world still lingers on in a present that has not laid aside its past.

No wonder Dick was mystified in his quest for the body and spirit of France, a body which has immolated itself so often that the spirit might survive, which has gone down so low into death that it might throw off corruption. In Cachar he spelt through the little library he had bought at Avignon, looking to these authors for a clearer vision. The result was a picture confused and contradictory, though he kept his faith in the ultimate destinies of the land of which Marguerite had become the embodied spirit.

He had not been on his plantation two years when a legacy

offered him the chance of a new kind of life. It was a contract for timber with a railway in the north of India. The work took him into the forests of the Upper Sutlej under the snows of Raldang and Kailas. He bought his pines and deodars as they stood, had them felled and cut, and sent the logs and sleepers swinging down the river through Bussahr into the plains of the Punjab. All day he was out in the sun or the rain, and in the evenings he read. He led two lives, and each of them gave zest to the other. He would come back happily tired from the great mast forest into France. Sometimes it would be Paris, but more often a quiet backwater of the provinces, some old city that bears the mark of the past. He was attracted by the rustic life, the superstitions, the festivals, the beautiful faith which he envied and could not possess. A description of the peaceful interior of a church made him think of the Pénitente Blanche, and this would call up other images—a Breton Pardon, the virtuous trespass of the daughter of the *broyeur de lin*, a sailor kneeling with his votive ship before an altar in Notre Dame de la Barque, or Félicité, that *cœur simple*, with the parrot whose identity became merged with *Le Saint Esprit*.

It was in the forest by the Sutlej that he taught himself French. He knew more words than many Frenchmen, but it was French learnt by the eye. He could not speak it or follow it when spoken. Through these bookish associations words often became familiar to him in their literary or figurative sense before he knew their simpler meaning, so that years afterwards, when he went into a village *charcuterie* to buy a slice of ham, he had to delve into his memory until the suggestion came to him from *une tranche de la vie*. He was naïvely mystifiable; quite simple words had a fascination for him. The ordinary cow took on a more sweet and meditative personality as a *vache*; he never forgot the day when he first heard a peasant woman call a sheep a *brebis*.

He had some foretaste of this which made his chase of associations good hunting. He enjoyed those nights with his books the more because he saw himself in places in which he would hear the phrases used that he had disinterred so curiously and perhaps use them himself. It would always be in the happiest scenes, at the fair at Tarbes when the streets were gay with the costumes of Pyrenean peasants, or on the corkscrew stair at Blois, or in Angoulême, that ancient city of peace. And Marguerite would be always by his side, ready to laugh at his mistakes. He loved to hear her laugh, and when she laughed at him her voice was sweetest, and her eyes. But he dared not hope too much.

V.

He heard sometimes from the *Pénitente Blanche*. She hoped he would stay with them at *Pertuis* on his way home through France. *Marguerite* would add a friendly postscript.

'*Mégasthène* sends you his love; his coat has grown. . . . We were at *Avignon* last week and went to see the house in the *Rue du Petit Pommier*; the street was empty, the shutters closed.' . . . 'Like *Petrarch*, I have climbed the *Mont Ventoux*.' . . . 'They found a bone of one of *Hannibal's* elephants last week at a village near *Beaucaire*. . . . Did I tell you that there is a Roman milestone in our garden?'

Marguerite's visit to *Tarascon* lent a new charm to *Daudet*. *Dick* read nothing but the '*Lettres de mon Moulin*,' '*Tartarin*,' and '*Numa Roumestan*' for a week. He asked her to write to him about books.

'You ask me what to read,' she replied this time in English. 'You know I adore the history. I have been reading *Lamartine's* "*Life of Jeanne D'Arc*," and *Vallet de Vireville*, and *Quicherat*, all the books I can collect about *La Pucelle*. In was in her that burnt the soul of France. Oh your English goddems! . . . Mother and I think of making a pilgrimage to *Domrémy* and *Rheims* and *Orleans* and *Rouen*—but perhaps we will leave out *Domrémy*. I do not think I could bear our poor wounded *Lorraine*. I should like to set up a statue at *Rouen* to the good monk *Isambert de la Pierre*, who alone was kind to the Maid. . . .'

It was *Marguerite* who told him of *Michelet's* picture of France in that wonderful Third Book of his History—a picture that made him feel as if he were a hawk and France a field spread out under his eyes so that he could see the colour of the pasture, the mountains, the forest, the harvest, and look down on each city and know the virtue of it, why such a soil should produce such a crop of men, what each artery brought to the centre and why it must needs bring that particular thing. It all lay open to him from the low tufted oaks of the *Ardennes* and the pines of the *Jura* to the vine-clad hills of *Burgundy* and the huge crenellated rampart of the *Pyrenees*. France had never seemed so great, its resources so rich, varied, and inexhaustible.

But *Michelet* dispelled any illusions he might have about the

Middle Ages. In its suggestiveness the History was another Avignon. Still the rationalised Dick kept the first idyll unspoilt. Truth in its poetic sense can live beside the prose of fact. For glamour he had Gautier, but was interested rather than carried away by his erudite romanticism with its charm a little spoilt by pedantry. Such far-a-way fantasies seemed better told without any machinery at all. One needs Prince Hassan's carpet to sup with Arria Marcella or King Candaules, and Gautier's was a conveyance which creaked and groaned as he stepped into it, and the conductor was at his elbow all the way.

Marguerite did not like Gautier. There was nothing morbid in her, no vague sentimentality in her feeling for old times. Patrician as she was, she knew too well what democracy had done for her country. Also, like Dick, she preferred Flaubert's naturalism or the kindly ironic detachment of Anatole France.

Dick was, if anything, more intrigued with the France of the present. It was equally remote. M. Bergeret was as mysterious as Abelard or the thirteenth-century Count of Toulouse: the mind of the politician who 'chased' the nuns as inscrutable as the heart of the Grand Lama. Modern French history held more of mystery than medieval. Dick discovered a country where the name of God is banned by government, where despotism parades in the cloak of liberty and the people entrust their destinies to political adventurers, often drawn from a class which the majority holds in contempt. Why, then, elect them? Marguerite told him that the real people, the bedrock of France, cared nothing for politics; they were indifferent to forms of government. How, then, did they exist as a nation, in the van of nations? What were the hidden springs of life? Dick pondered over Michelet's epigram, 'France is a person,' but he could not conceive the embodiment of a spirit so mobile, so fickle and stable, sober and passionate, frivolous and fanatical at the same time, a body 'half corrupt of sin—angel and wanton.' Marguerite helped him better in his reading of the genius of the people. She explained that foreigners could not understand France because nothing that is conspicuous there is representative. An English friend who had spent most of his life in the country had told her that neither among journalists nor politicians, nor in the fashionable life of Paris, will a stranger find any clue to the character of the nation. The true life of the people is apart from these—rather, antagonistic. France survives in spite of them.

Marguerite inspired him with her faith in a regenerate France,

a France resilient. The cloud of pessimism and indifference was lifting. The new race would lavish itself for her freely. The old wounds would be healed. The Rhine would wash her Eastern frontiers again. It was not hate that Marguerite felt for the invaders who had soiled and mutilated the beautiful body of France and destroyed her spirit for a generation. It was rather a gentle and pious determination to destroy, a saint's abhorrence of evil. It was through her vision that Dick came to see France as a person, the 'wanton' in her submerged, the 'angel' apparent:

'The shape of glad array,
The nervous hands, the front of steel,
The clarion tongue, the proud, bold face.'

Was the poet thinking of Jeanne D'Arc, he wondered? She had been sweet and gentle and compassionate, of a dove-like gentleness even when she was transfigured for the sword. Marguerite worshipped the Maid. She was of the same fine clay, in which fire sleeps. Dick thought of her as she stood in the doorway of the Rue du Petit Pommier, so slight and yet so strong and unafraid. He believed that hers was the kind of gentleness that could inspire a crusade.

VI.

It was on the broad back of a Breton road that he next saw Marguerite—outlined against the sky. It had been a hot summer in Provence, and Dick had found a telegram at Marseilles telling him that the De la Hunaudayes had gone north and asking him to join them at Dinan. She stood on the crest of the road, leaning against the wind. Marguerite could look reposeful in a gale. Dick saw her from the bottom of the hill. He jumped out of the carriage. As he strode to meet her another familiar form emerged by her side. It was Mégasthène. The old hound limped forward and put a cold nose in his hand.

'He remembers you,' she said with a sweet smile as she gave him her hand. 'He does not quickly make new friends.'

She spoke a pretty broken English.

'Mother has tea ready. You must be tired and famished. Here is our *nid*, but we are not often in it.'

She led him through a gate by a border of dahlias to an ivied porch. Madame brightened at the sight of him. She was greyer, but age had heightened her old-world charm. In features, he thought, she had grown more like Marguerite, who had changed

little in seven years save that one was more conscious of a vivacity underlying her repose, a latent animation that gave one a happy suspicion of ambush. She was no longer so pensive as La Jeune Fille.

After tea they went out into the garden. Dick was a boy again. Everything delighted him. He could hardly believe in the fulfilment of so many dreams. France gave him back so much of the English memories which had been mixed up with his homesickness in those five solitary years in the Himalayas. Little things which he had almost forgotten presented themselves again—tufts of blue succory by the roadside, toadflax and valerian on the garden wall. He told them how excited he had been when he found a patch of white clover in the Zoological Gardens at Marseilles. He felt like 'doing *puja*' to it, he said; 'that is, making my devotions.' He wanted a Druid. He felt that there ought to be some rite for home-coming exiles, paid to the soil, a sort of thanksgiving like the hymn chanted by the Massilian mariners at Port Vadrines when they sailed into the harbour at dawn and saluted the temple of the Pyrenean Venus. He gazed in rapture at a sleek, red, unhumped cow in the lane over the hedge, and a cart-horse with dappled quarters and huge hairy feet—amazing to look upon. In proclaiming the peculiar and unrecognised virtue of these common things he found a vent for his joy in being with Marguerite again. Madame smiled at his enthusiasm; she was warmed by his infectious youth. Marguerite was surprised that he knew the French words for everything. And yet how droll his French was when he tried to speak connectedly, and his accent no better than it had been at Avignon.

There was a beech in a corner of the garden so graceful and fanciful in design that Dick felt the branches were roofed for elves, and the floor beneath swept for their dancing. He climbed it and looked down on Dinan, and saw in its towers and walls and elm trees and jumbled streets his dream of an old French city materialised. He called to Marguerite to come up. She pleaded her frock. He urged. They compromised. If she would not come up, she must take him down—down the hill to the river and up again by that corkscrew alley to the church. Marguerite consented. They would have time to explore the town before dinner; she would be his guide.

'Take him by the Rue de Jerzual,' madame called after them. 'What a pity the lilac is over!'

Dick remembered having heard someone speak of Dinan in lilac-time, but high summer with Marguerite was good enough. Instead of lilac and apple-blossom, the lucerne and clover were in full bloom, the fruit was ripening in the orchards, and the fields of white *sarrasin* lay on the hillside like sheets of snow. A friendly sun shed its beams on them. Every day they went farther afield. Marguerite was searching for old Breton furniture, beds and panels, *bahuts* and *armoires*, and carved saints, relics of churches despoiled in the Revolution. They ransacked Cahurel's street of shops in Dinan, but one find unearthed in an old inn or some remote farmhouse by the sea was worth all the treasures of the 'Maisons des Antiquités.' It was at Plessix Balisson, in a tumble-down shed used for a cider press, that Marguerite came upon her greatest prize, a carved refectory table with worm-eaten cross-pieces connecting the legs and trestles which must have been as old as Tudwal. But Dick capped this when he tore away the grass and nettles from the foot of an old cattle-trough at St. Bridget and discovered in it a battered granite font supported by caryatids. As he peeled the moss from their faces they leered at him like Ganesh or Hanuman with a malice worth all the grimaces of the Hindu Pantheon. Marguerite said that he ought to be decorated.

Those were golden days. They would be away from Dinan sometimes two or three nights at a time. Madame was not an exacting chaperon; she loved Dick like a son. Often she would sit reading in the inn where they were staying while he and Marguerite explored the country, or she would spend an hour or two in a church or visiting the fisher-folk. She and Marguerite had a wonderful way of getting into touch with these people; it was delightful to go into a cottage with them and listen to some old lady in a butterfly coif and sabots pouring out her history. Once they went to a Pardon at Minnihi and another day to a Benediction of the Sea at Concarneau. But the most golden day of all was Marguerite's birthday, when they walked across the sands to St. Cast. They started at daybreak, when it was low tide, from St. Jacut-de-la-Mer and walked with bare feet, carrying their boots. At first Marguerite wanted to carry her own, and would not yield until Dick put one of hers into one of his and she laughed at his resourcefulness. When they were under the cliffs on the St. Bridget side they came on a deep unexpected channel. Dick explored up and down, but the water was almost up to his waist. The tide had begun to come in and there was nothing for it but that he

should carry Marguerite pick-a-back across. They emerged, drenched and happy, in a bed of blue sea holly on the yellow sands. Here, behind two rocks, hidden from each other but within call they dried their wet clothes in the sun. Dick was afraid that Marguerite would have to go straight back by the bridge at Guildo.

'We'd better go home,' he called to her; 'you will catch a chill.' But to his relief he found she was as eager to see the adventure through as he.

'Let us go to the farm,' she called from behind her cover. 'We can finish drying there.'

Dick wondered how so soft a voice could carry so far and be so clear. Like a ring-dove in a forest glade, he thought, and gave a shout of delighted approval.

They ran up the hill to the farm in the elms. Inside the raftered kitchen a bright fire was burning. The *patronne* heaped on more logs for them. The pleasant smell of hot tweed as the steam rose from Marguerite's skirt soon reassured Dick. The day would be their very own; he had never been so near her; the homely intimacy of the adventure opened new approaches. While they dried in front of the blaze they warmed themselves inwardly with boiling coffee and milk. Marguerite laughed at Dick's anxiety for her. She laid her hand on his to show that she was not chilled. It was as warm as his heart.

The *patronne* came and went, a bustling, kindly woman. She offered them eggs and cider and pears, but it was the old oak furniture that Marguerite eyed covetously. She pointed to the great pew-like bed in the wall into which the Breton climbs and rests with head and feet hidden, smothered in bolsters. 'Walnut,' she said. 'I wish I dare bid for it,' and then smiled at the thought of the good Célestine at Pertuis and the wry face she would make if she were asked to clamber into the cavernous affair. 'There is nowhere one could put it,' she concluded sadly. It was in the farmyard outside that Dick found the ghoulish font and bought it for a piece of gold and the price of a new cattle-trough, and gave it to Marguerite for a birthday present.

VII.

The sun was high when they started for St. Cast, and a lark was singing. They walked an hour by the coastguard's path through fields of clover and *sarrasin*, purple fields of clover and

white fields of *sarrasin* in rows side by side, all islanded with dainty apple trees like the garden of the Hesperides, and nothing but a thin hedge of gorse between them and the sea. And beyond the dip on the far horizon the blue Atlantic, a misty, pearly blue, the light blue of the wild flax blossom. And when they were tired they would sit down on a fragrant bed of thyme and marjoram, and Dick would smoke his pipe and Marguerite would ask him about his forest.

He told her how her letters were brought to him through the jungle by a dâk-runner with a staff of jingling bells to frighten away the bears, and how his hut had hung a thousand feet above the Sutlej and whenever he woke up at night and heard the perpetual rhythmic burden of the stream with its incessant undersong he thought of the sound of the rivulets and water-mills of Ile-sur-la-Sorque, which she had thought so musical on the way to Carpentras, or the gentler music of the Fountain of Vaucluse. And he wanted to tell her why he had spent half his days in the Himalayas and half dreaming in France, and what France had meant to him all these years and why it had meant so much, but he forbore, feeling that it would be easier on the way home, when the lights were softer and the moon rose out of the sea like mother-of-pearl. He was full of hope.

And then, after *déjeuner* at St. Cast, the inconceivable thing happened. They quarrelled.

It was all about a ridiculous monument in memory of the defeat of the English, *Le lévrier de Bretagne terrassant le léopard d'Angleterre*. Dick had the audacity to laugh at it, and to speak of the French victory as if it had been the repulse of a small raid—one of Pitt's adventures. It was tactless of him, but this Breton greyhound was so very French. It stood for the weakness which endears French people the more to Englishmen who are in sympathy with them, the little touch of theatricality, of dressing up and acting a part, the way they have of looking at themselves when they are doing anything, whereas the Englishman simply does the thing and does not think about himself at all, or so Dick fondly believed in his still unchastened insularity. He did not tell Marguerite so; she divined it in his laugh.

How little he knew her yet! He had spoken in raillery and hoped to draw some light badinage from her, one of her dainty flashes of wit. But her anger was a spark struck from steel. She was so angry that she wished to hurt his English pride. For Dick

had profaned a shrine, her image of the honour of France. There was no place here for proportion or discriminating values. She worshipped blindly; the least suspicious of a jest was sacrilege.

Dick tried to laugh away his offence. He even forbore to defend 'England's mercenary army,' but his humility did not appease her. She would not forgive him until she had taught him to readjust certain perverse notions of history from Agincourt, where the heavy chivalry of France were morassed and shot down by English archers hidden in a wood, to Waterloo, where with the help of allies England had overcome the worn remnants of Napoleon's great army, 'the last levy of France.' Marguerite quoted 'a beardless legion barely withdrawn from the *lycées* and their mother's kisses.'

Dick admitted that England had not fought single-handed. 'I have read your histories. They have too much—what is the word?—self-righteousness—sanctimony. It was always so. Even Henry V. said it was not he, but God, who punished the wicked Frenchmen.'

Dick smiled. 'I am afraid we are humbugs,' he said.

She did not spare him. 'You should not laugh at our *lévrier*. You have your rich colonies which you call "the white man's burden." We were fighting Frederick the Great when you took India from us. It was then the English leopard was *terrassé* at St. Cast.'

'Oh, please! Have mercy,' Dick said putting his hands to his ears with a parody of abjectness. 'It is I that am *terrassé*! You make me feel like one of those miserable "goddems."'

Marguerite was softened, but she did not smile.

'I am afraid you are going to say something about Joan of Arc,' he went on. 'Spare me, please! I couldn't bear it!'

He looked at the light on the gorse. A lark was singing still. The bees were humming in the clover. The sea was as blue, earth was as lovely, as when they left St. Bridget. And Marguerite was lovelier. She looked like the Maid who took up arms for the pity that was in the realm of France.

'You look like La Pucelle,' he said. 'Please forgive me. You know that to-day the English are with France. They would fight for you. Besides, Agincourt and Waterloo were so long ago.'

'Yes, I understand. You wish to be polite and to say kind things; but I can't help feeling hurt when I read your English books, and I believe you think the same. They all talk of France

as if she were a monster who devours her young. You boast that you have no revolutions. It is always compromise, comfort, safety, as if there were nothing worth shedding blood for. But is there no nobility in a people who give their lives freely for an ideal? It is better to destroy what is rotten and to begin building again.'

They had left St. Cast and the *lévrier* far behind, and were half-way back to St. Bridget, when a sudden heavy shower drove them into a coastguard's shelter. They sat down side by side on the warm bracken bed that half filled the hut. All Marguerite's resentment was gone. 'You will forgive me,' she said. 'I have been unjust. You did not know I could be so angry?' And she smiled sweetly at him. Then she spoke of her hopes for France, and her faith in the recovery of Lorraine—the Maid's country. France would live; her wounds would be healed by virtue of the indestructible spirit that was in her. She believed in the heroism of the new generation. 'All the corruption that you see is on the surface—scum only.'

'Et moi, tout le long de jour
Je rêve revanche.'

It was the sadness and yearning in her voice that gave Dick courage. There was the same look in her eyes which he had seen when she lost Mégasthène; only these were real tears. He hated the ravagers of France. He hoped that the day might come soon, so that he might fight for her dear country. He took both her hands in his and drew her to him. She turned away her face. The sunbeams falling through the gorse thatch played on her hair, weaving an aureole. For a moment the current of life stood still. Dick was spell-bound like a saint at a glimpse of the eternal vision. Then, carried away by the full tide, he drew her nearer to him. When he spoke her name she turned to him with a quick impulse and gave him her lips.

The shower had passed. The sun drew them out of the hut. A double rainbow spanned the horizon in the East. The two shafts of the inner arc rested in the sea and were reflected through the water on the golden sands. They watched it slowly float away over the Island of Ebihan towards St. Briac, and they were silent as if it were part of some beautiful rite. Dick felt a little chill of melancholy, a shadow of impermanence, against which his faith rebelled. Marguerite divined his sadness, or perhaps she saw the shadow too.

'It has gone,' she said, 'melted away. But it is not lost. Things endure, my dear Dick, especially beautiful things.'

'You mean we endure?—our oneness, our belonging to each other, whatever happens? You believe it, Marguerite?'

'Yes, Dick. For ever and always. I do not believe it; I know it. The good God does not give to take away.'

They watched the sun sink over St. Cast, and saw the little *clocher* and the windmill on the hill, with its naked sails like antennæ, become clear and black against the evening glow. The lights came out one by one across the bay. The flare of Cap Fréhel cast its red rays into the sky. Time stood still. There was no before or after.

The picture dissolved. The double burden of the Sutelj straining through the gorge underneath woke Dick to realities. He turned into the hut to finish his letter. He had great belief in Pertuis.

'French—frivolous.' The irony of it had touched him as if the kin of Jeanne D'Arc had been renegade. But that was absurd. Frank was just the happy, healthy animal he had been himself when Froggy used to say, 'You Cooning-hum, do me fotty lines.'

Marguerite's clear faith had come to be the one star in Dick's night. 'Things endure, my dear Dick, especially beautiful things.' Dick believed it, and he believed that Marguerite's son would break a lance for her some day, fight for her if needs be in real earnest, strike at the spoilers of France, meet their iron with a finer steel.

EDMUND CANDLER.

AN ADVENTURE.¹

RONALD GREGSON is a young man of twenty-six, earning (as he is to explain later) £500 a year, on which he manages to live comfortably as a bachelor. His rooms are well-furnished, if a little carelessly; the sitting-room, in which the adventure happens to him, is large enough to admit of a full swing with a driver between the table and the fireplace. Over the mantel-piece there is a small glass in which RONALD can admire himself; as he does this he has on his left-hand something much more worthy of admiration—a photograph (evidently enlarged from a snapshot) of a pretty girl, which stands on the mantel-piece. To the right of him is a large armchair. When he lies in this, he has only to stretch out his hand, and he can switch off the electric light, leaving himself alone in the firelight to wonder whether he dare ask the pretty girl on the mantel-piece to marry him. He has in fact done this every evening for the last fortnight.

To-night he is going out to a dance. It is nearly ten o'clock, and he is dressing leisurely as he wanders between his bedroom and sitting-room. On his last excursion from his bedroom he brings his coat and waistcoat with him, and he is now standing in his shirt sleeves and pale-blue braces in front of the fire, tying his tie by the glass before him. As he ties he whistles softly to himself the air of a waltz. By the way in which he stops suddenly, and gazes at the photograph of the pretty girl, you guess that it is a waltz which he has danced lately with her, or perhaps hopes to dance with her to-night. He leans over the photograph, holds it in his two hands, and says impetuously, 'Oh, you dear!' Then there is a voice behind him from the door . . . and his adventure begins.

THE VOICE. That's right. Take a good look at her. Better say good-bye to be on the safe side.

RONALD turns round suddenly and sees THE STRANGER. THE STRANGER has come in by the door opposite the fireplace, and stands just inside the room. He is meanly dressed in shabby black, his black hair is long, his clean-shaven face pale.

You could imagine him a religious or temperance fanatic for a short time, although religion and temperance have not been so far his chief gods. However, he is quite sober now, and he has (he thinks) a high duty to perform before he leaves the world. It is a world he hates and the person in it whom he hates most is himself. He knows he is

¹ Dramatic rights reserved.

a failure, but he persuades himself sometimes that he has never had a chance; and he blames the world—to which he would have been such a credit had he only been treated fairly. An awkward man, then, to get on with; and particularly awkward at this moment because he carries in his hand a revolver.

RONALD (*in a high startled voice*). Who are you? What are you doing here?

THE STRANGER. Ah! . . . No, better stay there. This thing might go off, if you move. Have you said good-bye to her?

RONALD. What the devil are you talking about?

THE STRANGER. That's right, swear. You're all the same, you aristocrats. (*In a sudden blaze of anger.*) Damn you!

RONALD (*recovering his nerve*). I haven't the vaguest idea what you're talking about. What do you want?

THE STRANGER. What do I want? Ah! (*In a low bitter voice.*) I'll tell you what I want. I want to see you. No, not you, as you stand there in your fine clothes—and your blue braces—but right into your soul. I want to see the fear come into your eyes, and into your voice as you realise that your last hour has come. I want to hear you protesting, pleading, cursing; I want to see you on your knees, begging for mercy; (*with a sneer*) in your pretty blue braces and all. And then when the society boy has bared his mean, cowardly aristocratic little soul to me; when I've seen him as he really is—and would be if this world had treated him as it has treated me—then I want to send him to a world where there are no rich and no poor, but only men and women. That's what I want and that's what I'm going to get.

(*He locks the door, comes in and sits on a small chair at the side of the table opposite to RONALD, the revolver still carefully levelled.*)

THE STRANGER. . . . Yes, (*with great relish*) that's what I want, and that's what I'm going to get.

RONALD. Thank you for warning me. And now I should just like to put you right on two points. First, I am not what you call an aristocrat—my name is Gregson. Secondly, since my braces seem to annoy you, you may as well know that blue ones are just as cheap as black ones or dirty brown ones or whatever you wear yourself. . . . And now that you've told me what you want, I should like to ask you if you're sure that's all you want. Are you sure you don't want . . . money?

THE STRANGER (*eagerly*). Ah, I thought so. That's the first thing you aristocrats think of—your dirty money. (*Passionately.*)

You think you can buy anybody with your dirty money ; money you've never done a stroke of work for in your life. Don't you offer your dirty money to me.

RONALD. Once more I am compelled to put you right on two points. First, I am not an aristocrat—my name is Gregson. Secondly, whether my money is dirty or not, I do a good many strokes of work for it. And there's another thing, Mr.—er—I don't think I caught your name ?

THE STRANGER. Never you mind my name. Take it that I haven't got one.

RONALD. Then I shall call you Algernon.

THE STRANGER (*jumping up fiercely and threatening the other with the revolver*). None of your high-bred insolence to me ! Stop it !

RONALD. My dear Algernon, I am sure you are a clever enough person to see that you have put yourself in rather a silly position. You began on too high a note. Having once announced that you mean to kill me, you can no longer dictate my language or behaviour to me. Why shouldn't I affect a tone of what you call high-bred insolence ? You say you'll shoot me if I do. But you have already said you will shoot me, anyhow. Isn't that so ?

THE STRANGER (*rather taken back, mumbling*). But I might shoot you now—at once.

RONALD. And miss the great treat you have promised yourself of seeing me on my knees, begging for mercy ? No, no, Algernon. You mustn't miss that. . . . And that reminds me of what I was going to say to you just now. You have a fault, Algernon, of which I have often meant to tell you. You *will* put thoughts and motives into other people's heads which were never there at all. I asked you quite casually a moment ago what the devil you were talking about. Immediately you leapt to the conclusion that I was an aristocrat, about to burst into a volley of well-bred oaths. Later on I asked you if you wanted money. If you have ever read any stories about highwaymen—and I take it, Algernon, from your melodramatic style that you are a great reader—you must know that it is what the man behind the pistol always wants, and the man in front of the pistol usually gives. However, you would have it that I attach great value to money and am always trying to bribe people with it. Why do you wish to make me out worse than I am ? Have you promised to shoot me, and are you trying to justify it to yourself ?

(THE STRANGER *has been looking steadily at RONALD during*

this speech, his revolver pointed straight at the latter. Now he speaks in a low voice.)

THE STRANGER. And in the morning his housekeeper will come, and find his body on the floor, and his blood will be upon the carpet. And the doctors will come, but it will be too late. And the girl on the mantel-piece will cry a little and wear black for a month and marry somebody else. And his friends will forget him; or they will remember him and say, 'Oh yes, he was the fellah who got shot by somebody. Queer case that—I always wondered what was behind it. I suppose he'd got mixed up in some shady business.' And he'll be dead. He'll have left the world of money and pretty clothes and good things to eat, and he'll be in the world where there are only men and women. Ha!

RONALD (*moved*). You brute!

THE STRANGER. Ah, I thought I'd shake you. We're all men and women under our masks.

RONALD. Why didn't you go on with your story? Shall I go on for you? And in the morning the police will come. . . . And one will go to the police and say: 'I saw a man, a suspicious-looking man, standing outside here that night.' And another will say: 'I sold a man a revolver.' And a third will say: 'I heard a shot and saw a man running away.' And by-and-bye there will be a description of the man in all the papers . . . and then he will know what it is to be hunted. Day and night he—

THE STRANGER. You don't understand. I am leaving the world too. Damn the place; it hasn't done much for me.

RONALD. You coward! Oh, you coward! It's you who are afraid of what you're going to do, not I. And so we're both going to that other world? And are there only men and women in it, or are there murderers and murdered?

THE STRANGER (*jumping up furiously*). On your knees and beg for mercy—and perhaps I'll spare your life after all. But you must grovel—grovel, damn you.

RONALD. Look here, this is simply absurd. Still, I *will* beg for one favour.

THE STRANGER (*eagerly*). Well?

RONALD. Let me sit down—I'm tired of standing here—and you sit down too, and tell me all about it. I promise I won't take any advantage of it, and when you want to begin the shooting, I'll stand up here again and you can go back to the door, and then we'll be as we were when we started.

THE STRANGER. An aristocrat's word!

RONALD. For the twenty-fifth time, I am not an aristocrat. My name is Gregson. Grandfather Gregson kept a small iron-monger's shop. Don't be put off by the fact that I wear blue braces. They're just as——

THE STRANGER. Sit down!

(RONALD *sits down on a small chair at the fireplace end of the table.*)

RONALD (*stretching himself*). That's better. . . . Now then, what's it all about? Have you ever seen me before?

THE STRANGER. No.

RONALD. Have you any reason for hating me?

THE STRANGER. Yes.

RONALD (*surprised*). Me? I mean me in particular?

THE STRANGER. Not you in particular. I hate the whole lot of you.

RONALD. The whole lot of us aristocrats—us Gregsons?

THE STRANGER. The whole damned lot of you.

RONALD. Why did you particularly select *me*? I haven't annoyed you in any way?—you haven't seen my blue braces out anywhere?

THE STRANGER. I've seen plenty of your kind. It's your kind that has made me what I am.

RONALD. What are you? A Radical? (THE STRANGER *laughs scornfully.*) A Socialist? An Anarchist?

THE STRANGER (*with a flourish*). An Avenger! A shooter-down of the oppressors of the poor!

RONALD. Yes, but why particularly me? Why should I be the first oppressor of the poor to go?

THE STRANGER. I marked you down. I promised myself that you should go first. I've seen you coming out to your dinner on bitter cold nights, as you've stepped in your taxi and said carelessly, 'Savoy.' I've seen you coming home, smoking your big cigar, your hands deep in the pockets of your big fur coat. That's the sort of man that's ruining England, I've said to myself. The porter slipped out for a drink to-night, I slipped in, your door was open. My chance had come. To-night I rid England of a drone.

RONALD. I see. . . . Now I wonder if it has occurred to you, Algernon——

THE STRANGER (*fiercely*). I wonder if it has occurred to you, Mr. Gregson, that I mean business. I wonder if it has occurred

to you that there are women and children at this moment dying for want of bread, dying for want of warmth, dying for want of care, while you, warmed and well-fed and well-clothed, go off to your gaiety.

RONALD (*gravely*). I know there are. I'm very sorry.

THE STRANGER (*bitterly*). Sorry! What have you done to help them?

RONALD. What have you?

THE STRANGER (*taken aback*). What do you mean?

RONALD. I just wondered what *you'd* done.

THE STRANGER. Done? I never had a chance. I'm just one of them. (*Grimly*.) But I'm going to do something now. (*He shakes his revolver.*)

RONALD. How will that help the women and children?

THE STRANGER. It will show the aristocrats what they have to fear. I shall leave a full account behind me of the reasons why I executed justice on one of their number; the papers will be full of it; it will call attention to the terrible poverty abroad. It will help the women all right—don't you be afraid of that.

RONALD. Do you know, I really believe it might. And I am not sure that it wouldn't help them even more if *I* were to shoot *you*. The publicity would be the same, you see, and——

THE STRANGER. Your class has murdered my class often enough; it's now our turn.

RONALD. Really, I don't know which annoys me most; the way you perpetually place me in the aristocrat class, or the way you now place yourself in the oppressed slave class. I have already told you that Grandfather Gregson was a small ironmonger. My father would have been a small ironmonger too; but instead of spending his time gassing about the poor chance he had in life, he set to work and made his own chance. At the age of forty he was earning—earning, mark you—a thousand a year, not as a capitalist or a sweater or any of the things you dislike so much, but as an engineer. He married and had one son—that's me. He gave me a decent education—I grant you that; public school and varsity. But he didn't give me anything else. You said just now that I didn't do a stroke of work for my money, and I told you I did a good many strokes for it. I do. I'm an artist—black and white. I earn about £500 a year and that's what I live on. I don't know that a black and white artist is a particularly useful person, but it takes all sorts to make a world, and at any

rate I work hard, I don't get drunk, I don't run after the women, and I try to buck up the people round me. . . . That's all about me—except that I have a pair of light blue braces which cost three and sixpence . . . and, as I say once more, my name is Gregson. Now let's hear about *you*.

THE STRANGER (*bewildered*). Me ?

RONALD. Yes, you. You said you'd never had a chance, that the world had never done anything for you. Let's hear. I should like to compare your life with my father's. He didn't have much of a chance either. (*His voice becomes rather louder and more commanding than he knows.*) Where were you educated ? Board school ?

THE STRANGER (*reluctantly*). No, Grammar school.

RONALD. Yes, then what ?

THE STRANGER. Clerk to a solicitor. . . . God, how I hated him!

RONALD. Yes ?

THE STRANGER. Left . . . got a job in a wine-merchant's. *He was a brute !*

RONALD. Yes ?

THE STRANGER. Left and went to Australia sheep-farming. Came back——

RONALD. Why ?

THE STRANGER. Hated the life—Ugh ! Beastly ! Came back and—(*his voice rising suddenly to a shriek*)—Damn it, what are you cross-examining me for like this ? (*Fiercely, as if to convince himself.*) I tell you, I've never had a fair chance.

RONALD (*looking at him pityingly*). Poor devil ! (*He suddenly sees his watch on the table.*) Good Lord, it's a quarter past ten. I shall be late. (*He jumps up.*)

THE STRANGER (*shouting*). Sit down ! (*Pointing the revolver at him.*) I'm sick of this world and I'm going out of it, and you're coming with me.

RONALD. Why ?

THE STRANGER (*bitterly*). Because I hate you. You—successful . . . devil.

(*There is silence for a moment.*)

RONALD (*quietly*). I wonder if you would do me a favour ?

THE STRANGER. I shouldn't think so.

RONALD. You've got me here ; you can kill me if you like. . . . I was going out to-night. . . . (*Shyly.*) Somewhere—

somewhere I particularly wanted to go . . . Let me go (*pleadingly*.) It will be only a few hours more life—and I promise, I give my word of honour, that I will come back faithfully. . . . Just one last dance—with my . . . friends.

THE STRANGER. I've told you I hate you. Do you think I'd expect you to keep your word?

RONALD. I think you hate me because you know I'd keep my word. . . . Let me go. I give my sacred word of honour that I will come back between two and three—having mentioned your visit to nobody. I will come back alone, and I will stand up against the photograph here, and you shall stand by the door, just as we were when it began. . . . (*To himself.*) I must, I *must* see her again.

THE STRANGER (*bitterly*). You really expect me to believe that you'd come back to be murdered, as you call it?

RONALD. I'd come back. You mightn't murder me. You aren't keeping *all* your programme, you know. There was some talk of my being frightened.

THE STRANGER (*suddenly thumping the table*). Yes, you *shall* go. . . . and I'll keep *all* my programme (*sneeringly*) if you come back, my beauty. Ha!

RONALD. I shall come back. (*He puts on his waistcoat and coat.*) Thank you very much. In a way it will be better for you too, because it will be easier for you to escape later on. (*Picking up his hat and coat.*) Oh, but I forgot, you're going to shoot yourself too. Let's see, have I got everything? (*Feeling in his pockets.*) Yes. Then, *au revoir*. (*He bows to THE STRANGER and goes out.*)

(*It is nearly three o'clock in the morning. In the armchair by the fireplace THE STRANGER sprawls asleep. His revolver has dropped from his hand and is on the floor in front of him.*)

The door opens and RONALD comes in. He stops and looks at THE STRANGER in surprise. Still looking at him he takes off his hat and coat and puts them down on a chair. Then he moves and stands over THE STRANGER, gazing thoughtfully down at him. Suddenly he sees the revolver, and instinctively he stoops to take it—and then with an effort stops himself. He rubs his head and looks in a puzzled way at THE STRANGER, the revolver, and then round the room. Finally he shrugs his shoulders and walks to a table, beneath the window at the back of the room, on which lies a cigarette-box. He puts a cigarette in his mouth and goes to the mantel-piece for matches. This brings him to the photograph of the pretty girl. He throws away the cigarette,

picks up the photograph and kisses it impetuously. With the photograph in his hand he walks over to the armchair again, and stands there looking from the girl to the man. . . . Perhaps now he will take the revolver and perjure himself—but THE STRANGER begins to wake up, and RONALD hastily puts the photograph down on the edge of the mantel-piece nearest him—an accident which is to save his life. THE STRANGER opens his eyes and looks at RONALD wonderingly.)

THE STRANGER (*beginning to realise where he is*). So you've come back?

RONALD. Yes, I've come back.

(THE STRANGER closes his right hand, misses the revolver and half jumps up.)

RONALD. There it is, at your feet.

THE STRANGER (*snatching it up*). Ah! (*With sudden suspicion he opens it.*)

RONALD. It's all right, I haven't touched it.

THE STRANGER. How long have you been here?

RONALD. A minute or two. (*He turns round and walks to the table, sitting down on the edge of it.*)

THE STRANGER. Was I asleep?

RONALD. Yes.

THE STRANGER (*after a pause*). So you've come back, eh?

RONALD. Yes.

THE STRANGER (*leaning forward, fiercely*). Why have you come back?

RONALD (*surprised*). Didn't you expect me?

THE STRANGER (*sulkily*). No.

RONALD. But I said I was coming. I gave you my word of honour.

THE STRANGER (*with a sneer*). Haven't words of honour been broken before now? (*Passionately.*) You make me sick the way you talk. The world's thick with broken words of honour. An aristocrat's honour's no better than a poor man's.

RONALD. Of course it isn't. But don't you keep your word when you give it?

THE STRANGER (*fiercely*). Never you mind about that. (*Sulkily.*) You look after yourself. You'll find that'll give you quite enough to attend to.

RONALD (*surprised*). I'm sorry. I didn't mean—but really, from the way you talk one would think that you didn't want me to come back.

THE STRANGER. You fool! Of course I didn't want you to.

RONALD (*lightly*). Well, I'm sure I didn't want to. (*Getting off the table.*) In that case suppose we——

THE STRANGER (*threateningly*). Sit down. (RONALD *sits down again*. THE STRANGER *looks at him with a puzzled face as if trying to understand him*. With a sneer he says:—) I suppose you thought I'd let you off if you came back, and then you'd be able to boast that you'd kept your word like an English gentleman—eh?

RONALD. Well, of course, I hoped——

THE STRANGER (*exultantly*). Ha! That was it. Like a pretty tale in a story-book. The Repentant Burglar (*looking mockingly up to Heaven*) 'oose 'art, my friends, was changed by the noble conduct of a perfect gentleman.

RONALD (*annoyed*). The perfect gentleman having found the burglar fast asleep in a chair with his revolver on the ground.

THE STRANGER (*jumping up in a fury*). Damn you—I'm going to shoot you now—(*he waves the pistol in RONALD's face*) I'm going to shoot you now, do you hear?

RONALD (*in a nervous excited voice*). I thought you said you didn't want me to come back.

THE STRANGER. You fool! I'm going to shoot you—but that's nothing. We've all got to die once. Supposing you had broken your word . . . and lived? Wouldn't that have been something? To live, despising yourself and despised by me. I'm going to shoot you now, because I hate you. I wanted to spare you because I despised you. . . . (*More calmly.*) Why do you think I let you go to your—(*scornfully*) your dance?

RONALD. Well—I *was* rather surprised—I thought perhaps you were a bit of a sportsman, you know, and——

THE STRANGER (*with utter contempt*). A bit of a sportsman! That's the sort of world you live in.

RONALD (*with spirit*). And I thought perhaps you thought I might be more frightened at three o'clock in the morning, particularly when I'd had time to think about it. You remember you said you wanted to see my mean, cowardly, aristocratic soul do—something or other.

THE STRANGER (*nodding his head*). Ah, you've got more sense than I thought. That might have been a reason. (*In a low voice.*) But when I found I couldn't frighten you, and when you suggested going away and coming back again, then I had

the glorious plan suddenly. I would let you go . . . and you wouldn't come back, or you would come back with a policeman, or—somehow you would break your word—your solemn sacred aristocratic word of honour. Oh, you would justify yourself all right; your aristocratic friends would swarm round you and justify you. 'Keep your word to a murderer? My deah boy! Probably the fellah was a lunatic. One never keeps one's word to a lunatic.' But in your heart of hearts you would know. It would live with you day after day; and worse than that, night after night. You'd pretend to yourself, you'd pretend to the world . . . but all the time you'd know!

RONALD (*pointing at him excitedly*). As you know!

THE STRANGER (*recovering himself*). What do you mean?

RONALD. As you know the truth about yourself! (*With increasing excitement; for he has much rigidly restrained emotion to let off.*) Oh, you come here and talk, and pretend that you're going to kill me because I oppress the poor, because it will help the women and children who are starving. You pretend to yourself that you're an avenger—you an avenger!—but you know in your heart what you are. Killing me because I oppress the poor! You're murdering me because you're jealous of me. I've succeeded—that's my offence. I've worked hard, I've lived a clean life, I keep my word—ah! you hate to see that, don't you? You came out to kill one of the effete aristocracy, didn't you? But you'd have had no real heart for killing one of *them*. You and they are brothers; you're all one class. Success; honour—that is what you really hate. . . . You say you've never had a chance. On your own showing you've had half a dozen chances and thrown them away. You're a failure, a failure—that's what you are, my friend. And you know it. Ay, and you know what it is to break your sacred word of honour too, and that's why you hate me for keeping mine. You know what it is to be a coward, and that's why you hate me because you can't frighten me. Ah, but much as you hate me there is someone whom you hate even more . . . and that's yourself. No wonder you want to shoot *him* too.

(*This outburst has overborne anything—denials, threats, revilings—which THE STRANGER may have meditated in reply, but he pulls himself together at the end of it, and speaks in a cold cruel voice.*)

THE STRANGER (*looking meditatively at his revolver*). The execution will now begin.

RONALD. The murder will now begin.

THE STRANGER (*sharply*). Go to your place—where you were when I first came in. This is going to be all fair and above-board. (RONALD moves to the side of the fireplace furthest from the armchair.) No, the other side!

RONALD (*coldly*). I think this——

THE STRANGER. Under the photograph, damn you! Weren't you looking at it when I came in?

RONALD. Yes, but——

THE STRANGER. I tell you this is an execution. It's going to be quite fair and above-board. I'm not going to take any advantage of you, and you're not going to take any advantage of me. (*Sharply*.) Go there, I tell you, and you can say good-bye to her.

RONALD. But—— (*He stops suddenly. His eyes light up. You might almost say he is smiling.*) Right! (*He stands in front of the photograph facing the door, to which THE STRANGER has now gone.*)

THE STRANGER. Now this is an execution. I'll just tell you again quite shortly why you are being removed. (*He prepares to make his last speech.*) In the first place, the aristocratic class——

RONALD (*trying to master his excitement*). One moment, if I may, before you begin. You are quite satisfied that I have kept my word in every particular?

THE STRANGER (*viciously*). Damn you, yes.

RONALD. And I've taken no advantage of you?

THE STRANGER. No.

RONALD (*in a high excited voice*). Then in that case I will wish you good-night. (*The switch of the electric light is beneath his left hand. He turns it off and dives behind the armchair to the left of him. THE STRANGER fires—a fraction of a second too late. There is a moment's silence and the voice of THE STRANGER is heard.*)

THE STRANGER. I can see you. . . . Damn you, where are you? (*He blunders forward. RONALD pushes the chair out, and he trips over the corner and comes down with a crash. There is a short struggle . . . and then the light goes up, and RONALD is seen standing by the armchair with the revolver in his hand, and looking down at THE STRANGER, who has got to his hands and knees.*)

RONALD (*sharply*). Get up! (*THE STRANGER gets up in a slow bewildered way.*) Now, go over to that chair. (*He indicates the chair on the further side of the table, and THE STRANGER mechanically obeys him.*) That's right. (*He moves forward himself and sits*

on the chair opposite.) Here we are again ! And now, Algernon, we can really talk. You shall choose the subject. We aristocrats, we Gregsons, we may oppress the poor, but we are always polite. What shall we talk about ? Education, ironmongery, blue braces, the advantages of the electric light as compared with gas, the prison system— (*He is naturally excited and rather pleased with himself, and he talks absurdly, with a hint of hysterics behind it.*) THE STRANGER is still a little dazed at the sudden change of fortune ; particularly as he bumped his head rather badly in his fall.)

THE STRANGER (*muttering*). How did you do it ?

RONALD. Aha ! It was neat, was it not, Algernon ?

THE STRANGER. Why didn't you do it at first ?

RONALD. I hadn't the opportunity, my Alge. . . . Besides I only thought of it two seconds before I did it.

THE STRANGER (*looking up*). What do you mean, you hadn't the opportunity ?

RONALD. Because, ducky, when you first came in I was the other side of the fireplace.

THE STRANGER (*eagerly*). Then you did cheat me ? (*Bitterly.*) You gave me your word of honour that all would be exactly the same as—

RONALD (*soberly*). I didn't cheat you. I went of my own accord to the proper side of the fireplace. Twice I told you that that was the side where you found me, but you wouldn't listen. And even then I did nothing until you had assured me that I had kept my word to you.

THE STRANGER. But the photograph ! You were—

RONALD. I said good-bye to it when you were asleep. With no thought, I promise you, of getting an advantage out of it, quite accidentally, I put it back on the other side of the mantelpiece. . . . That gave me a chance. It put me next to the switch. . . . So you see, it was she who saved my life. (*Softly.*) Who should save it, if not she ?

THE STRANGER (*muttering*). I'm better out of the world. I'm a failure. I can't even kill. (*To Ronald.*) You've won. You deserve to. You're a better man than me. There's not a thing I've said or done to-night that hasn't been rotten ; not a thing you've said or done that hasn't been good.

RONALD. I'm afraid there is. . . . I did one rotten thing to-night (*with a jerk of his head to the photograph*). In those three hours you gave me—I got engaged to her. I didn't mean to—

it sort of came out ; but to propose to a girl with this hanging over me. . . .

THE STRANGER (*wearily*). She'll forgive you that all right.

RONALD. I think she must have done it already. That was why she saved my life.

THE STRANGER. What she won't forgive you is coming back here afterwards. (*Wearily.*) I know women.

RONALD (*suddenly realising that he is discussing HER with a stranger—a thing one never does.*) However (*coldly*) that's my business. (*Getting up.*) The question is, what about you ?

THE STRANGER (*leaning forward eagerly across the table and speaking very fast*). Let me off this time, Mr. Gregson, sir. I'll go abroad, I'll go to Canada, I swear to you faithfully, I will. I've never had a real chance, sir, really I haven't. I've been mad to-night. I don't know what made me do it. I suppose not having had any food for two days, I—

RONALD (*sternly*). Stop it ! (*He stands up.*) You said just now that there wasn't a thing you'd said or done to-night which hadn't been rotten. You were right. And what you've just said and done is the rottenest of the lot. I told you that I'd done a pretty rotten thing myself to-night. I have . . . but it's nothing like so rotten as what you want me to do now. (*Keeping THE STRANGER covered, he walks slowly back to the window which he opens with his left hand. Then taking a taxi-whistle from his pocket, he blows it loudly several times. He comes forward again and says with a half-smile :—*) It's an inartistic ending, but I'm afraid it won't come like a pretty tale in a story-book—not anyhow. (*He walks back to the open window and waits there—one hand holding the revolver, the other the whistle.*)

A. A. MILNE.

LAST CENTURY LETTERS.

From a Collection of Autographs.

BY LADY CHARNWOOD.

THERE is a peculiar charm in the perusal of old letters at a time that holds so little that is restful or soothing. The present is too urgently upon us just now to make concentrated reading an easy matter, and these echoes of the past that come to us—some of them from a time not altogether unlike our own days in their anxiety and stress—have a special interest. The fact that our minds are so full of one subject seems to remove us further than usual from previous generations, and to give to their words an added pathos. How little life is changed! How entirely life is changed! Or rather, how much human nature remains the same!

In the letter that follows, written in a year of anxiety and war that the present time may well recall, there is a delightfully unconscious—or is it conscious?—blindness to the similarity (as it would seem to the reader) of the way in which both Mrs. Hastings and Mr. Woodman regard their ailments. If the brother-in-law is imaginative, what is the lady whose health benefits by royal favour? And yet there is a sense of reality in the brother's affection for his sister that is very pleasant reading.

'To Mrs. Woodman,
'Ewell, Epsom, Surrey.

'Berkeley Square, 29th Jan^r. 1801.

'MY DEAR SISTER,—I cannot repay your affectionate solicitude for the health of my dear Mrs. Hastings better than by the information which I have it in my power to give you, that she is in as good health as I have known her to possess these many years past; though her present mode of life, which seems to have contributed to it, appears almost too violent and hurried for her delicate frame to support the long continuance of it.

'I am sorry to hear that Mr. Woodman has been so much indisposed. He is so little accustomed to be sick, that I indulge the persuasion that a portion of his late complaints has existed in his own apprehension. I rejoice however that he is better.

'I never knew this town in so great a bustle of politics. These

have their fashion like other modes ; and it is now the fashion to despair of our public situation ; I believe, without reason.

'Mrs. Hastings was indeed much fatigued by standing a great part of 3 hours and a half at the birthday, and passed the ensuing night almost without sleep:] but her reception from the Queen and all the princesses was so very gracious, that she gained in spirits, and by them in health, more than she lost of the latter.

'When we shall be able to leave town God knows. Our first visit out of it will be to Ewell.

'I ask no more questions ; but you are never out of my mind, and my dear niece occupies a constant place in it—I was happy to see my nephew look so well. Our joint love attends you all. Adieu, my dear sister.

'Your ever affectionate brother,
'WARREN HASTINGS.'

The next letter, written on June 18, 1809, has a charm as rare as it is delightful, and seems quite oblivious of danger and distress. There is a genuine ring in the assurance that letter-writing costs no trouble, which is hardly needed, so apparent is it in every word. It is written from Heslington, as is the published one to Lady Holland on June 24 in the same year, where Sydney Smith says 'I have laid down two rules for the country : first not to smite the partridge ; for if I fed the poor, and comforted the sick, and instructed the ignorant, yet I should be nothing worth if I smote the partridge.' One feels that the children also were probably unsmitten, in spite of the father's anticipations in the letter that follows.

'DEAR LADY CAROLINE,—I assure you sincerely that nothing laid heavier on my burthened conscience than not calling on you before I left Town. I have only to say that I went thro' as much in the last 3 or] 4 days as would have fatigued nine heathen Gods—and have laid the foundation of many nervous complaints which will agitate me for the rest of my life—unless I am rested by the copious feeding and profound tranquillity of Yorkshire.

'I have taken a very pleasant house about a mile from York—just sufficient to enable me to stem the torrents of tea by which I should at a nearer distance be overwhelmed. I have read much in books of simple pleasures and am about to try whether there [be] any such pleasures or not. I rather believe in their existence—but am determined to tell the truth—if I find the whole to be an imposture. By simple pleasures I mean taking a walk—playing with my children and talking to them and sometimes whipping them—dis-

ordering and dirtying a garden—in other words Gardening—reading out loud to my Wife,—rejoicing in the profits of my Land. Now Writers on the Subject of happiness have always contended whether in Essays, Sermons or the dense dulness of large Volumes that happiness is not to be found at Lady Cork's, or at the Argyle Rooms, but that it was to be sought in Villages, fields and gardens amid Lambs, Calves and little children. I will bring this great question to a fair issue—and when I have done so—you shall benefit by *my* wisdom and experience. It will give me great pleasure to hear from you whenever you will do me that favour—it costs me no trouble to write letters to anybody; it gives me great pleasure to write them to you—because you are a very good-hearted Lady, and I respect and regard you much. Pray remember me very kindly to Lamb, and believe me, dear Lady Caroline,

'Very respectfully and affectionately yours,

'SYDNEY SMITH.

'June 18, 1809.'

Then here is a letter which affords a piquant difference of tone:

'To

'Messrs. Cadell & Davies,

'Strand,

'London.

'Barley Wood, 1st May, 1810.

'GENTLEMEN,—If it be quite convenient to you I shall be glad of the favour of my account in the course of this month. There are some inclosures making round us, and about the first week in June if agreeable to you I shall be glad of part of the money if it be a reasonable and proper time to desire it, to make a little purchase of land adjoining to our house.

'My friends complain that *Coelebs* was sold too cheap. But I prefer that fault to the contrary one. I own I should have been ashamed of the price of the slender volumes of my friends Miss Smith and Mrs. Montagu. *A propos*. Have the goodness to send me the 3rd and 4th vol. of Mrs. Montagu when published, also the fourth number of the Gallery of Portraits.

'Have the goodness to give a list to the Printer of the excessive incorrectness of the 12th edition of *Coelebs*, which I believe has more errors than all the preceding ones put together. I make great allowance for hurry, for I see in every quarter what immense business you are engaged in.

'I wish you could see an Urn which I have just erected on a

little grove to our lamented Bishop of London. Do you never travel westward? This is the prettiest county in England.

'I remain, Gentlemen,
'Your obliged,
'H. MORE.'

One wonders if the 'gentlemen' so austere dealt with ever penetrated to the 'prettiest county in England,' which here means Somersetshire. The view of innumerable urns would hardly compensate for the severity which it seems might be their portion. The Bishop of London to whom the memorial was erected was, of course, Dr. Porteus, Hannah More's faithful friend. Macaulay found the urn still unmoved when he revisited Barley Wood in the autumn of 1852.

Very different is a letter from Mrs. Shelley to Mrs. Leigh Hunt. It is dated from Livorno, September 11, 1819. For obvious reasons, only part is given; its subjects are referred to again a few days later in the long outpouring of the husband of the sender to the husband of the recipient of the fragment here.

'Sept. 11th, 1819.

'I hope you will send the things I wrote for or will without delay—for indeed I need them—if you have not slip in a pair of Baby's stays for a pattern—but pray send them immediately and what is of as much consequence send me the bill of lading the moment you get it—you know that I shall be in the most wretched state ever poor woman was in if you do not let me have them.

'I am obliged to Hunt for his page of excuses—give my love to him and tell him that I note that for the future he should follow Boccaccio's example who always makes his people begin *prestamente* their tales without any excuses at all—Tell him that I read that most delightful author at Rome—and that his letter joined to my recommendations has persuaded Shelley to begin him—he is now reading him regularly through and is quite enchanted by his mixture of hilarity and Patter.'

(The absence of all stops except dashes, is Mrs. Shelley's own, and in all these letters I have given the writer's spelling.)

The wonderfully interesting letter which follows next is now published in full for the first time, and was the subject of an article in the *Athenæum* by Mr. H. Buxton Forman on April 10, 1909. The hitherto printed versions of it were from a mere collation of Leigh Hunt's and Mrs. Shelley's versions. The frail paper of the

original seems exhausted, as it were, with all the life and fire of the words written upon it.

‘Livorno, Monday, Sept. 27, 1819.

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,—We are now on the point of leaving this place for Florence, where we have taken pleasant apartments for six months, which brings us to the 1st of April; the season at which new flowers and new thoughts spring forth upon the earth and in the mind. What is then our destination is yet undecided. I have not yet seen Florence, except as one sees the outside of the streets, but its physiognomy indicates it to be a city which, though the ghost of a republic, yet possesses most amiable qualities. I wish you could meet us there in the spring, and we could try to muster up a ‘*lieta brigata*’ which, leaving behind them the pestilence of remembered misfortunes, might act over again the pleasures of the interlocutors in Boccaccio. I have been lately reading this divine writer. He is, in the high sense of the word, a poet, and his language has the rhythm and harmony of verse. I think him not equal certainly either to Dante or Petrarch, but far superior to Tasso and Ariosto, the children of a later and of a colder day. I consider the three first as the productions of the vigour of the infancy of a new nation, as rivulets from the same spring as that which fed the greatness of the republics of Florence and Pisa, and which checked the influence of the German Emperors, and from which through obscure channels Raphael and Michel Angelo drew the light and the harmony of their inspiration. When the second-rate Poets of Italy wrote, the corrupting blight of tyranny was already hanging on every bud of genius. Energy and simplicity and unity of idea were no more. In vain do we seek in the finest passages of Ariosto or Tasso any expression which at all approaches, in this respect, to those of Petrarch and Dante. How much do I admire Boccaccio! What descriptions of nature are those in his little introductions to every new day! It is the morning of life stript of that mist of familiarity which makes it obscure to us. Boccaccio seems to me to have possessed a deep sense of the fair ideal of human life considered in its social relations. His more serious theories of love agree especially with mine. He often expresses things lightly, too, which have serious meanings of a very beautiful kind. He is a moral casuist, the opposite of Christian, stoical, ready made and worldly system of morals. Do you remember one little remark or rather maxim of his, the application of which might do some good to the common narrow-minded conceptions of love? “*Bocca baciata non perde ventura; anzi, rinnuova, come fa la luna.*” If you show this to Marianne give my love to her and tell her that I don’t mean xxxxx. . . .—!!? ()? . . .

'We expect Mary to be confined towards the end of October, and one of our motives in going to Florence is to have the attendance of Mr. Bell, a famous Scotch surgeon, who will be there. I should feel some disquietude in intrusting her to the best of the Italian practitioners. The birth of a child will probably relieve her from some part of her present melancholy depression.

'It would give me much pleasure to know Mr. Lloyd. Do you know when I was in Cumberland I got Southey to borrow a copy of Berkeley from him, and I remember observing some pencil notes in it, apparently written by Lloyd, which I thought particularly acute. One especially struck me as being the assertion of a doctrine of which even then I had long been persuaded, and on which I had founded much of my persuasions regarding the imagined cause of the universe. "Mind cannot create; it can only perceive." Ask him if he remembers writing it. Of Lamb you know my opinion; and you can bear witness to the regret which I felt when I learned that the calumny of an enemy had deprived me of his society while in England. Ollier tells me that the Quarterly are going to review me; I suppose it will be a pretty morsel, and as I am acquiring a taste for humour and drollery I confess I am anxious to see it. I have sent my "Prometheus Unbound" to Peacock; if you ask him for it he will show it you. I think it will please you.

'Whilst I went to Florence Mary wrote to you, but I did not see her letter.

'Well, good-bye. Next Monday I shall write to you from Florence. Love to all.

'Most affectionately your friend,

'P. B. S.

'You will probably soon see Mr. Gisborne. I think I told you about him before.

'Direct your letters "ferma in Posta Firenze." (In Mrs. Shelley's hand.)

'Leigh Hunt, Esq., "Examiner" Office,

'19 Catherine Street, Strand, London.'

Between the last two paragraphs there is an unfinished and cancelled paragraph reading as follows:

'I omitted, in the transcription of my poem which you will have received, the following verse, which comes after the line——'

This Mr. Forman assumes to relate to 'The Masque of Anarchy,' written out by Mrs. Shelley, and elaborately revised by Shelley himself. The quotation from Boccaccio, it will be remembered, comes in the fourth part of 'Peter Bell the Third.'

The allusions to Charles Lloyd and Charles Lamb make this a favourable place in which to insert an excellent letter written to the former by the latter.

'To Chas. Lloyd,
' Birmingham.

' DEAR SIR,—I can only say that I shall be most happy to see anything that you can send me at any time that has reference to your newly taken up pursuits. I will faithfully return the manuscript with such observations as a mere acquaintance with English Poetry may suggest. I dare not dictate in Greek. I am *Homo unius lingue*.—Your vindication of the Lines which I had objected to makes me ashamed of the unimportance of my remarks; they were not worth confuting. Only on Line 33, page 4, I still retain my opinion that it should be "were made."

"All seemed to wish that such attempt were made
Save Juno, Neptune, and the blue-ey'd maid."

' I am glad to see you venture *made* and *maid* for rhymes. 'Tis true their sound is the same. But the mind occupied in revolving the different meaning of two words so literally the same, is diverted from the objection which the mere Ear would make, and to the mind it is rhyme enough. I had not noticed it till this moment of transcribing the couplet. A timidity of Rhyming, whether of bringing together sounds too near or too remote to each other, is a fault of the present day. The old English poets were richer in their diction, as they were less scrupulous.—I shall expect your MS. with curiosity.

' I am, Sir,
' Yours with great respect,
' C. LAMB.

' My kind remembrances to Robert. I shall soon have a little parcel to send him. I am very sorry to hear of the ill health of Sophia.

' Temple,
19 June, '09.'

It seems melancholy that the man chosen by Shelley to receive so many proofs of friendship should have ever written as does Leigh Hunt in the following composition, able as it undoubtedly is. The one letter is so obviously written with the utmost spontaneity, the other with calculation in every line.

' Hammersmith, Dec. 21st.

' MY DEAR LORD JOHN,—My son-in-law, Mr. Cheltnam, comes to me making a bold face respecting certain vacancies and changes

in the offices of the House of Commons, and this induces me to make a still bolder face, and venture to call him to your Lordship's recollection. I do not know whether I ought to do so without being able to specify any particular office, and so put you to the vague trouble of enquiring (supposing you thought fit to enquire) whether anything could be done for him; but I count, as you kindly led me to do, upon your pardoning my ignorance for the sake of the motive.

'I cannot help taking this opportunity of saying with how much interest I read the Lecture in which your Lordship left the times that are coming such memorable words respecting the unhappy infallibility that was "silent and satisfied" with a hypocritical excuse, and the progressive spirit that "laughed and learnt." How you can maintain this unceasing activity in one way or another for the good of your fellow-creatures would surprise me, if I had not too long known you to be an exception to a heap of ordinary rules. Ever since I first saw you, I always said of you (pardon me for personally criticising you at all) that you appeared to me to possess the head and brows of a sage upon the face of a youth;—a very enviable combination surely. Pardon also my saying this at this particular moment; but your superiority to other commonplaces will save me from your giving it an ill construction.

'Your Lordship's ever obliged and affectionate servant,

'LEIGH HUNT.

'P.S.—No answer of course is expected to this letter, as a matter of ceremony.'

The return to the true-hearted simplicity of Sir Walter Scott in the following letter is grateful to the mind. One feels glad to know that in the anxiety with which that stainless soul was harrowed during his wife's fatal illness, when his daughter Anne's health was such a cause of apprehension, the other Anne, to whose mother he is writing, did come on May 4, as the diary tells us.

'My niece, Anne Scott, a prudent, sensible, and kind young woman, arrived to-day, having come down to assist us in our distress from so far as Cheltenham. This is a great consolation.'

The postscript is proof—if the fact were not too well known for proof to be wanted—of that unselfish consideration of Sir Walter for others which was part of his very being.

'MY DEAR MRS. SCOTT,—I am unspeakably grateful for your kind compliance with my urgent request, which I have just received. I am on every account delighted to say that though Anne may strive with some anxious hours, yet I hope the very dark clouds we had every reason to expect will not overcloud her residence

here. We have great hopes that immediate danger is not to be apprehended. Lady Scott, to the surprize of the medical people, has taken with advantage on two separate days—yesterday being one—the foxglove in unusual quantities without either the violent sickness or the alarming change of pulse which attended the violent medicine at its commencement, while at the same time it has had the effects they desired in diminishing the progress of the disease. She has a degree of strength quite astonishing and suffers no pain. So that I beg Anne will not hurry herself about her journey, but wait a good and pleasant opportunity.

‘I trust my niece Mrs. Huxley will be soon with you to fill up this great blank, and I need not say I hope she will visit the land of her fathers and her loving uncle with her nursery. We have plenty of room, you know, and I am sure will not doubt her welcome.

‘I write in great haste to save the post, and I am much your thankful and obliged brother,

‘WALTER SCOTT.

‘Abbotsford, 26 April.

‘Love to little Eliza and kindest compliments to Mr. Macculloch. I am sure I am depriving him of a great pleasure in his niece’s society, but distress makes terribly selfish creatures of us.’

The note inserted here is chiefly put to point the contrast between the utter absence of self-consciousness with which both Shelley and Scott wrote to their friends, and that presence of self-consciousness which was almost a part of Byron, and seemed somehow to be queerly undetrimental to his work.

‘My DEAR BANKES,—I am engaged at ten, but can’t you come at 8? I want very much to see you and hear all your treacheries. I have been and still am laughing at parts of your note; you certainly are the best of companions and (*I won’t say*) the worst of friends, in me you find the reverse.

‘Yours ever most affect^{ly},

‘BYRON.

‘Sunday evening.’

The last letter in this paper is one of quite peculiar interest at this time. Never, since those first years of its infancy, has the ‘Marseillaise’ played a more important part than now. The words of its author, anxious about his poor pension, seem very pathetic. Although his air was interdicted during the Empire, at this moment it is difficult to put a limit to the money that Rouget de Lisle could have if he were alive and claimed it. His letter tells a very different story.

'Choisy-le-Roi, 19 juillet, 1832.

'À Monsieur

'Monsieur Genetet, Rédacteur au Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux publics, à Paris.

'CHER MONSIEUR GENETET,—Recevez tous mes remerciemens pour le bon souvenir que vous voulez bien conserver de moi, et qui m'est d'autant plus précieux que je le dois à mon pauvre de Larnand, dont la mémoire me sera toujours bien chère.

'Au service que vous venez de me rendre en m'envoyant la lettre de votre ministre, pourrais-je sans indiscretion vous prier d'en joindre un autre ?

'Une lettre de M^r. de Montalivat au date du 15 mai m'annonce qu'une indemnité de 500^f m'était accordée sur les fonds de son département, à compter du 15 mars.

'Lorsque en conséquence je me présentai au ministère pour toucher le courant et ce qui se trouvait échu de cette indemnité, c'était à la fin de mai, M^r. Sourgeois m'apprit qu'une seconde annuité, de mille francs, m'était de plus accordée par M^r. D'argent, et me fit compter le montant et les arrérages de l'une et de l'autre, ce qui s'est continué pour le mois de juin.

'Aujourd'hui M^r. D'argent me mande que l'indemnité dont je jouis sur les fonds de son département est portée à mille francs, à compter du 1^{er} de ce mois.

'Ma première annuité est-elle augmentée de 500^f ? La seconde est-elle diminuée de cette même somme ? Suis-je plus riche ou plus pauvre de 500^f par an ?

'Que je vous aurais d'obligations d'éclaircir cette importante énigme, si, comme je l'imagine, il vous est facile de le faire, et de m'en donner le mot par un mot de réponse, [non certes que je prétende élever aucune réclamation s'il y a lieu, mais au moins voudrais-je ne pas faire quelque gaucherie en suivant cette chance.

'Mes voyages à Paris sont très rares ; mais ce serait un bien grand plaisir pour moi d'aller vous remercier de vive voix, soit chez vous, si je savais votre adresse, soit au ministère, si l'on peut arriver jusqu'à vous.

'Agréez l'expression de toute mon estime, et de mon dévouement sincère.

'ROUGET DE LISLE.'

Let us hope, at least, that he knew he had done well by his country, so well that his name and fame would be lastingly cherished. Surely any author would regard that as satisfaction sufficient, and payment in full.

SWITZERLAND IN WAR TIME.

WE had passed within twenty miles of Valenciennes, where Uhlans had been seen on the previous night, and yet I still found it difficult to believe that the war could affect anything so routine as the journey to Switzerland. In those early days the war still seemed dreamlike and unreal. At Dôle the dream became a nightmare, as we waited in the little station and watched the tragic train-loads of wounded passing in from the battle front in Alsace.

The long journey—twenty hours from Paris to Pontarlier instead of eight—was tedious, but it was not without compensations. If you flash through from Paris to the Alps between sunset and sunrise, the intervening stages lose significance. This tired train that seemed to drag itself through the plains of France gave reality to many a little wayside station which had been nothing but a name, and romance to the gradual transition from the flat country to the first uplift of the hills. Never have I longed more intensely for the first feel of Swiss soil. As the line steepened beyond Dôle the train seemed to quicken with new hope, as if it longed to throw off the weight of sorrow and suspense that brooded over France. But we were not to reach Switzerland that night. We could go no further than Pontarlier.

Next morning there were passports to be viséd before we could cross the frontier. The entrance to the Mairie was blocked by a crowd studying the telegrams posted outside. This was on August 25. Namur had fallen; the great retreat was fairly begun. Of all this we knew nothing, though we guessed much. The groups in front of the Mairie melted away and reformed again. Those nearest the board read out the telegrams in subdued tones. 'For the moment we have abandoned the offensive, but we hope soon to resume it. There is no cause for anxiety.' The optimists affected cheerfulness and declared that we were drawing the Germans into a trap. But the optimists were in a minority, and the picture post-cards in the shops, which represented the Allies carving up a pie labelled 'Germany,' brought small consolation.

At last! The train swept out of Pontarlier and carried us with a rush into Switzerland. But even in Switzerland the gloom of war prevailed. Lausanne, where I lunched, was enthusiastically pro-French, but Lausanne knew more than France, for the Swiss papers of course had published the triumphant German telegrams.

I spent the night in Berne and the evening with some Swiss friends in a café. My Bernese friends seemed confident that Germany would win and win quickly. A journalist ventured to remark that Kitchener had said that the war would last three years, and he was promptly informed that the Germans would take Paris in three weeks. 'Nothing can stop them. I hear they have some wonderful secrets up their sleeve, some new kind of gun against which nothing can stand.'

'But even if they take Paris,' said the journalist, 'they will not have beaten England.'

'Oh if they take Paris they will tell the French that they will let them off with a very slight indemnity if they can persuade England to withdraw, and then England must withdraw.'

'Humph,' said the journalist, 'they are very obstinate, these English.'

As to the responsibility for the war they seemed fairly agreed that Russia was the villain of the piece, and they pretended great astonishment that England, the home of freedom, could ally herself to such 'a reactionary semi-Asiatic power' for the purpose of crushing civilised Germany. They professed, and I think sincerely, great sympathy for Belgium. They regarded Belgium as an unfortunate little State squeezed in between two quarrelsome neighbours, and they affected to believe that if Germany had not got in first, France would have struck through Belgium at the German manufacturing centres. Their views were typical of the majority of German-Swiss. They believed that Germany was bound to win, and as the war was ruinous for Switzerland, the sooner she could win the better. Had the Allies led off with dramatic successes they would have been almost as anxious for the Allies to win. Their one idea was to get the war finished as soon as possible. But, even in those early days, there was a strong minority in German Switzerland hostile to Germany, and even those who wanted Germany to win entertained no unfriendly feelings against England or France. At the beginning of the war hundreds of English tourists were stranded in Switzerland. Cheques and letters of credit resembled a certain famous treaty. Many of these visitors had good reason to be grateful for the courtesy and consideration with which they were treated by their hosts, not only in French, but also in German Switzerland. Resolutions of thanks were forwarded both to the individual *hôtelières* and also to the President of the Republic.

After a short visit to Lucerne I went on to Basle. At the beginning of August an absurd rumour appeared in the English

press to the effect that the Germans had violated the neutrality of Switzerland by seizing the Basle station. The mistake probably arose from the fact that Basle merges into suburbs which stand on German soil. I visited this frontier—a most business-like barricade of wagons and sand-bags and earthworks thrown across a busy street. A very solemn German sentry seemed fully prepared to guard the integrity of German soil, but I was not out for invasion.

It is, by the way, easy to discover oneself in Germany unawares. An English journalist recently booked a ticket between Basle and Schaffhausen, both of them of course Swiss towns. At an intermediate station he left the train for the refreshment room. He was promptly arrested, for the station was just across the frontier. Of course had he remained in the train he would have been safe, for the train was technically Swiss territory. He is now in Ruhleben.

Basle was certainly interesting. From the roofs of the hotels, or from the hills behind the town you could watch the rival energies of the French and German aircraft. By day and by night we heard the great artillery duels in Alsace. One evening I strolled out after dinner and climbed the hill behind the town. The dark plains of Germany lay below, pricked by the distant lights of Baden. The guns were still. An occasional flash may have been summer lightning or the last flicker of a weary battle. There was no other sign of war. The evening was peaceful; the starry sky untroubled. As I strained my eyes towards the distant battle front the bugles suddenly rang out the last post for the Swiss troops quartered on Basle. The whole town seemed to take up the melody and singing voices blended with the bugle notes. This sudden intrusion of music lent an unreal touch to the scene. It was like an opera effect, and for the moment I almost imagined that the war was a stage war, the bugles blown by stage supers, and the lights of Baden nothing but stage lights showing through a painted background.

I did not stay very long in Switzerland. Wolff announced one morning that the English army had been surrounded and the General Staff captured. This was not the kind of news one liked to assimilate in a German-speaking town.

France had been anxious on the outward journey, but the gloom had deepened manifold when I again crossed the frontier. I reached Paris on the morning of September 1. The day before, a Taube had dropped bombs on the town, and the consulates were besieged by English and American residents anxious to escape before the siege. It was said that the German guns could be heard in the suburbs. An excited American lady remarked 'Surely the Germans

won't be allowed to shoot before every American citizen has left Paris.' This, you must remember, was in the days when Americans still considered American citizenship as something sacred and inviolate. The *Lusitania* was still afloat.

The Gare St. Lazare was a battlefield in miniature. Two American ladies had come all the way from Geneva with six large trunks and a Pekinese dog, and somehow or other we managed to get both the trunks and the dog to Havre, which we reached fourteen hours after leaving Paris. It was a sad journey. Refugees flying before the dreaded Uhlan invaded us at wayside stations. Alarmists declared that the Germans had made a raid down the sea-coast, that the line was cut and that we should never reach Havre.

My visit to Switzerland was short, but I had learned a lot. I was forced to admire the efficiency and thoroughness of German propaganda. In this great war none of us can afford to neglect the tribunal of neutral opinion, a fact which the Germans were prompt, and we were slow, to realise. In the first month of the war the German-Swiss heard nothing but the German case, and the German case skilfully argued takes some answering. Truth is not mighty enough to prevail unassisted. We ignored Switzerland for several weeks. Our papers arrived late, or did not arrive at all. The distribution of the White Paper was left to private enterprise. Germany supplied the Swiss press and the leading Swiss hotels with a free telegraph service. We did neither. First impressions are difficult to eradicate, and the Germans certainly enjoyed the first innings on a wicket that had not been cut up. Even so the German-Swiss were much more divided than the French-Swiss. From the very first there was a powerful Anglophil party, and a still more powerful party whose motto was 'A curse on both your houses.' The Germans, I think, rather overdid their propaganda. Spitteler, of whom more anon, voiced the sentiments of the majority when he complained of the dictatorial tone of war propaganda. Perhaps, on the whole, our *laissez-faire* policy had a certain negative advantage.

Somewhere about October, the Government appointed a Press Bureau which was charged with the task of putting our case before neutral countries. A number of writers were asked to send articles to the leading papers in neutral countries. I was invited to supply the *Bund*, the leading organ of German Switzerland, with a weekly contribution. I did my best, but it was a depressing task. By the time my article had been passed by the Bureau and translated by a Swiss friend—for my own German is colloquial rather than

literary—it did not appear till some ten days had elapsed. Try to write to-day something about the war that will be new and interesting ten days hence, and you will understand why I gave up the impossible after three months.

Meanwhile, my Anglophil friends in Switzerland kept on sending me anxious appeals. Prominent Swiss journalists could not procure English papers. The German-Swiss press complained bitterly of the cavalier way in which we treated them. Germany supplied them with free telegrams, and the German papers arrived up to time. 'We print,' as a leading Swiss editor said to one of my Swiss correspondents, 'all the news we can get. We have every desire to be strictly neutral, but as long as England sends us no copy save the official telegrams, so long as her papers arrive days late, it is obvious that German news must predominate in our columns.' I suggested to the Press Bureau that they would do better to drop my articles and spend fifteen or twenty pounds a week in telegraphing interesting items of news, but the expense was considered too serious. I cannot help smiling when Germans accuse us of Machiavelian corruption and bribery to secure a verdict from the neutral press. I can answer for one neutral. The corruption of the Swiss press costs exactly twopence halfpenny a week. A better service of English papers was however arranged for, and when I visited Switzerland this year I found in the book-stores various English pamphlets translated into German.

The German-Swiss press has on the whole been fairly honest in its attempt to preserve the proper balance. The *Bund* and the *Neue Züricher Zeitung* are, for instance, much more neutral than the *Journal de Genève* and the *Gazette de Lausanne*. The *Journal de Genève* has, by the way, more than maintained its excellent literary character since the war began. Amongst other distinguished contributors Romain Rolland has given them of his best.

The French-Swiss press is frankly anti-German. The German-Swiss press seems to believe that Germany is invincible, but from anti-French or anti-English bias they are fairly free. They wisely exclude all discussion concerning the causes and the blame for the war, and they do not encourage 'atrocities' stories from either side. It is to pamphlets rather than to the press that you must turn for evidence as to the real sympathies of the Swiss. These do not entirely coincide with the lingual boundaries. French Switzerland and Italian Switzerland are unanimous in their support of the Allies but German Switzerland is divided. The majority

of French-Swiss not only desire France to win ; they want Germany to be beaten and punished. They dislike the Germans. In German Switzerland I never heard the French abused, nor did the average German-Swiss contemplate with enthusiasm the prospect of Germany in a position to dictate her own terms. They know too well what this would mean. The Swiss have long memories. Their national struggle for independence against Austria may be ancient history, but though the Morgarten and Sempach belong to another age, there are Swiss alive to-day who were mobilised against Prussia in 1857. There is, of course, a small but very demonstrative pro-German party, but their pamphlets and writings have called forth some powerful replies from the German-Swiss who distrust Germany. On the whole, I should say that the intellectuals of German Switzerland are pretty evenly divided. No Englishman could desire a more sympathetic treatment of English culture than Professor Vetter's 'Die Kultur-Bedeutung Englands.' This paper was read to a society of Zurich students, who met together through the winter months for the study of the rival 'Kulturs' in a gallant attempt to lift their outlook in the world war above the 'mists of commonplace and superficial discussion.'

The most important of these pamphlets is 'Unser Schweizer Standpunkt,' by the great German-Swiss poet Karl Spitteler. The Germans have a way of annexing German-Swiss poets, and they have certainly annexed Spitteler. Good German critics have placed him in the very front rank of German poets, just as Gottfried Keller, the Swiss novelist, ranks as one of their great romantic writers, just as Hodler and Böcklin are considered German painters, and Rousseau a French writer. That is the worst of having no national language. That Spitteler should be anything but an enthusiastic pro-German has greatly distressed the Germans. Spitteler himself seems surprised. He tells us that in his youth he looked to Germany as the fount of inspiration, the country of legend and dream, the land of poetry whose face is the face of home, 'wo Berg und Tal uns mit Heimataugen grüssen.' Germany made him. He has thousands of friends in Germany ; his French friends 'can be counted on the fingers of the left hand.' In fact, he has only three French friends. In Germany he feels at home. In France he feels 'surrounded by cold mistrustful strangers.' And yet he has written a pamphlet which has enraged all Germany, with the incidental result that his letters to German friends are thrown into the wastepaper-basket by the Censor.

The pamphlet is not, however, professedly anti-German. It is a plea for Swiss unity. It is a reproof to the mere partisan of his countrymen, and though only addressed to his German-speaking compatriots, it applies, *ceteris paribus*, to every canton in Switzerland. And not to Switzerland alone. Certain of his sayings might well be taken to heart by all the belligerent nations. Amongst others:—‘A warlike press is not a very exalted literature. Is it really necessary that we should poison the bloody wounds of war with ink? . . . he who dies for his country has at any rate a nobler rôle than he who merely scolds for it.’ The pamphlet will live as literature long after its timely counsel is no longer needed.

Spitteler begins by remarking that he is much distressed by the sharp division between French and German Switzerland. ‘It is no comfort to me to be told that in the event of war we shall none the less stand together . . . must we then have war in order that our essential union shall be demonstrated?’ Spitteler is very much alive to the internal difficulties and perils of a country that blends three races and three speeches under one flag. It is all the more important to remember that those who live beyond the frontier are neighbours, ‘and until something untoward happens friendly neighbours, while those who live within the frontiers are brothers. The neighbour may turn and fight against us. The brother under all circumstances fights by our side. A greater difference is inconceivable.’

It is therefore, says Spitteler, essential that Switzerland should keep her neighbours at a proper distance. ‘Switzerland is lucky in that she has no foreign policy.’ Spitteler warns his countrymen that the day they begin to contract understandings and alliances with other countries marks the end of Swiss independence. ‘Our troops stand alike on all frontiers because we yield to none of our neighbours unreserved trust. Every State robs as much as it dares.’ The German-Swiss must remember that they are not Germans, despite the fact that ‘Germany has generously and without jealousy taken the Swiss masters of literature to herself and in some cases placed them above her own.’ Spitteler reminds his countrymen that they should show a special sympathy towards small States, such as Belgium and Serbia. For the Swiss, ‘the Serbians are no mere mob’—(‘*Bande*’)—but a people. ‘No race since Homer’s day has produced such magnificent epic poetry.’ He tells us that the Swiss doctors and ambulance volunteers returned from the Balkan wars with the greatest respect for the gallant Serbians.

Spitteler renders a generous tribute to England when he recalls

to his countrymen our diplomatic support on two critical occasions. During the Civil War of 1847, Prussia, Austria, and France supported the Sonderbund, a league of Catholic cantons whose tendency was reactionary and secessionist. Switzerland was in grave danger of sharing the fate of Poland. Palmerston alone was opposed to foreign intervention, and when the Powers issued a hostile manifesto he succeeded in keeping it back until the Sonderbund had been beaten and the foundations laid for a united and independent Switzerland. Ten years later the integrity of Switzerland was again menaced by Prussia over the Neuchatel question. The three races of Switzerland mobilised with equal determination to maintain their independence. Once again England's timely intervention, ably seconded by Napoleon III., persuaded Prussia to hold her hand. 'England,' says Spitteler, 'if not Switzerland's only, is at least Switzerland's most reliable friend, and if you reply "mere egoism," I can only pray that in our hour of need we may always find such egoists to support us.'

The German-Swiss are very impressed with the German contention that France should never have allied herself to Slavs, nor have used against civilised white troops her Turcos and African regiments. Spitteler reminds the Germans of their old alliances and understanding with Russia, and as to the Turcos he points out that war is not a chivalrous duel with code and etiquette, but a death struggle in which any help is welcomed. 'If a burglar threatens you with a knife and then remonstrates with you when you summon your house dog on the ground that you are turning a four-footed unintelligent brute on to a human being, you will probably answer "Your knife prevents me feeling any shame."'

This remark infuriated the Germans; but the sentence that caused most offence was Spitteler's reference to the German 'revelations' based on documents stolen from the Brussels archives. Spitteler condemns this 'fishing for documents in the body of the victim before it has ceased to palpitate. To seem whiter need Cain blacken Abel? It is bad enough to murder your victim. It is beyond all limits to slander him as well.'

The peroration is a notable passage in a pamphlet, no page of which is devoid of masterly expression. My rough paraphrase does not reproduce the dignity of the original, but it gives some idea of the fine ideal which Spitteler holds up to his countrymen.

'It is not so difficult to preserve the proper balance if only you can use a certain logical discrimination. You tell me that this is all very well, but this balance involves a great mental effort. Surely

not, for it is to your heart rather than to your head that I would appeal. When a funeral passes by, what do you do? You uncover. As you watch a tragedy on the stage, what do you feel? Reverence and emotion. And how do you behave? You listen in sympathetic and undemonstrative silence. Such behaviour is instinctive. It does not need to be taught. Well, my friends, we are privileged by a freak of fate to watch from the stalls this grim tragedy that is being enacted in Europe. Sorrow is Lord of the Stage and behind the scenes lurks Death. Turn where you will, the mourning of those that weep must reach your heart, and the note of this hopeless grief is the same in all nations, for sorrow knows no distinctions of speech. Let us therefore uncover ourselves to all that mourn. Thus shall we attain the correct neutral, the correct Swiss stand-point.'

Spitteler's pamphlet had a considerable effect. The German method of warfare had an even greater influence in chilling the sympathies of the German-Swiss. The change was very apparent to me on my second visit to Switzerland—a visit by the way which was not designed to avoid the National Registration Act, for I had previously been rejected as unfit, the result of an old accident. I spent over a month in Switzerland this summer, and discussed the situation with leading Swiss in French and German Switzerland. French Switzerland is more united than ever in its support of the Allies. In German Switzerland the pro-German party is still strong, but the anti-German party is certainly no weaker. The extremists on both sides are, however, in a minority. 'The best result would be stalemate,' is the view of the great majority. They do not want Germany beaten, but they are afraid of Germany victorious. Let me try and summarise in a few paragraphs the opinions of nine German-Swiss out of ten. 'We are not overfond of the Germans. We have no sympathy for the ideals of the military caste. Our own army you must remember is the most democratic in the world. We have no officer caste. Anybody with the necessary ability who cares to undertake the requisite training can become an officer, and save for a few staff officers, all our officers are expected to have some other profession. Nowhere did the Zabern affair provoke more indignation than in Switzerland. We are fully alive to their shortcomings. They have no notion how to conciliate subject peoples. Your great achievement in South Africa would have been impossible to them. If Germany were to violate our frontiers the Swiss would fight to the last man. Our difference would disappear with the first shot in defence of our neutrality.

Nor are the Germans very popular even in German Switzerland. We have various nicknames for them, none too flattering. We suspect their economic penetration. Germans are getting too many of the best positions in German Switzerland. We bear no ill-will to anybody. You will never hear a German-Swiss abusing the French, though you will hear plenty of French-Swiss abusing the Germans. None the less, we believe that the German case is quite as good and quite as bad as your case. We think they had to fight, and that if they had not fought now, Russia and France and you would have crushed them in a few years' time. We do not think that Germany has the monopoly of militarists or chauvinists. This war, in our opinion, is due to the jealous hostility of two powerful and quarrelsome groups. The peoples nowhere wanted war, and to us there is something tragic in the spectacle of the best blood of Europe being shed at the dictates of the small cliques that make war. We do not wish to see anybody triumph in this war. We believe that if all lose alike there is some hope that the peoples of Europe will take the control of war out of the hands of the men who make war, but do not themselves fight. If either Germany or France is crushed there will be another war of revenge in forty years. As to the accusations of outrages and so forth we have read your Bryce report and the German reports on French and Russian atrocities, and we discount them all alike. War turns millions of men loose, and amongst these you will find plenty of brutes, but we do not believe in organised brutality, and though the German conduct of the war is severe we do not believe that they are any more guilty of brutalities than their opponents. War breeds cruelty and lies. Many of us were profoundly shocked by the *Lusitania* incident, by Louvain, by the French use of Turcos, and by your ineffective attempt to starve German women and children. All these things can be defended and are perhaps inevitable in a war of this description, but we do not like them. We are tired of propaganda literature, and all we ask is that your diplomatists and editors on all sides should get to work and make peace. You chatter about the dangers of an inconclusive peace. There is nothing inconclusive about the ruin which another year's war will bring to all Europe.'

Switzerland to-day is a sad and anxious country. She is not losing her sons on the battlefields. In all other respects she is suffering more from the war than any country save Belgium and Serbia. Even before the war Switzerland was overbuilt. To-day

the situation is desperate. Most of the Swiss hotels have been heavily financed by the banks, and the Government has been forced to issue a sort of indefinite moratorium to keep the hotel industry solvent. But tourists, contrary to popular belief, are not the only nor yet the most important Swiss import. Her other imports have been terribly curtailed by our sea power. Our blockade has hit Switzerland more severely than any other neutral country, for Switzerland has no seaboard. We have found it difficult to prevent American ships carrying American raw materials and American manufactured goods to neutral ports. But Switzerland has to persuade one of her four belligerent neighbours to carry those same goods on their railways, and it is therefore easy for any of the belligerents to control the importation of goods into Switzerland. England may not be able to stop American goods unloading at Amsterdam, but nothing can force France or Italy to place her overworked railways at the disposal of Switzerland. To Germany and Austria Switzerland looks for sugar and coal, and Germany and Austria are not anxious to supply these, save in exchange for other things which Switzerland can only get by the grace of the Allies. The recent creation of the Import Trust has slightly improved a situation which was very grave.

Swiss neutrality has proved, not only a benefit, but almost a necessity to France, Germany, and England. Switzerland, despite the divergence of her private sympathies, has laboured impartially to reduce the horrors of war. It is in Switzerland that most of the negotiations for the exchange of prisoners have been effected. Switzerland is the clearing ground, not only for prisoners but for correspondence between Germany and France. In one month, according to published statistics, Switzerland carried over a million letters to and from the prisoners' camps. This little State, the meeting point of three races, is the model for a saner and wiser Europe. French, German, and Italian Switzerland preserve their languages and preserve a great measure of autonomy. In spite of differences and disagreements, in spite of different ideals, they contrive to live under the same Government and under the same flag. Internationalism here at least does not spell denationalism. It is to Switzerland that we owe the greatest of all international conventions, a convention which, though often abused, is more often respected, the Red Cross on the white background.

ARNOLD LUNN.

DON PILTICH AND SANCHE QUILL.

EUCLID PILTICH was the son of Phineas Piltich, a fact only important in so far as it illustrated the family eccentricity, which showed itself even in the nomenclature of the members. In spite of the sound of the names, the family was not even remotely connected with America, but was a sound British stock. It was inevitable that Piltich himself should be peculiar; he had grown up with the label, 'Balmy Piltich.' He had an aunt who once sketched an approaching express train with her easel and canvas stool firmly planted between the rails. As a culminating anomaly of his education, Piltich passed into the army, and in due course became a subaltern of artillery.

The summer of the year 1914 found Piltich in Russia on special leave to learn the language. Previously he had mastered the German tongue, and knew that country well; of France and French he knew nothing. Towards the end of July—long before England awoke to the European crisis—there were premonitory symptoms of trouble in Russia, so Piltich determined to go home, but first seeing whatever he could. On the last day of July he entered Germany without passport with the intention of making his way across direct to England. He relied upon his knowledge of German and upon the habitual vacancy of expression of his face, which had often stood him in good stead, to pull him through. Although no war had been declared, and all governments were protesting their love of peace, signs of military preparations were not wanting; the attitude of German railway officials was critical and distrustful. Piltich's dreamy eyes took in various little details.

The normal railway routes were disorganised; Piltich found himself stranded at Cologne. Overshadowed by that airy fabric of architectural lacework, the cathedral, the railway station at Cologne is one of the most fascinating stations in the world, and of the many resplendent officials who adorn its platforms the most impressive—with the exception, of course, of the station-master—is a massive individual whose duty it is to clang an enormous hand-bell throughout the precincts of the station, announcing in a deep cavernous voice the departure of trains: '*Zug nach Mainz, nach Mannheim,*' &c. &c. In more peaceful times Piltich would have exchanged confidences with such a man; even as it was he hastened to consult him.

'Are there any trains for Holland?' asked Piltich in a German accent, good enough to allow him to pass as a Dutchman.

'All railways are now reserved for Royal and Imperial purposes,' chanted the mountainous official.

'Shall I have to walk?' inquired Piltich.

'There is always,' said the bell-ringer with a majestic sweep of his hand, 'the German Rhine.'

'Ach! how beautiful!' immediately responded Piltich; the words were a set ritual formula in the Rhine provinces.

The corpulent railway man beamed with delight upon the tactful Piltich, by whose appearance he had, up till then, not been impressed. Piltich was, without doubt, ungainly and nondescript; his head was narrow, with shaggy, mouse-coloured hair; his body was angular at unexpected places; he might have been anything, but obviously something unmilitary and untrained—an unpleasing sight to the orderly German mind. Nevertheless the advice given to Piltich was sound.

'Hasten,' he said, 'to the river. You may catch the last boat to Rotterdam. As a Dutchman, you will be permitted to travel.'

Piltich gratefully took the hint and assumed the nationality suggested. He had to sacrifice his luggage, but that did not worry him, as he had never possessed anything of value. At the frontier there was some difficulty about the absence of a passport, which was surmounted by playing the usual game of the idiot boy, with the plaintive wail: 'I didn't know.'

In England Piltich was annoyed because he was not allowed immediately to join the Expeditionary Force. However, by persistently visiting the War Office, he managed to cross to France on August 25, in the rôle of what is known as 'base detail,' part of the first reinforcements, ready to take the place of the dead.

War opens up a vista of possible fame for the young soldier. Piltich was twenty-seven years old, with about six years' service as a subaltern; in rather a vague way, he was ambitious. He would have willingly become a general, if they had chosen to make him one; on the other hand, he would have taken over the command of the North Sea Fleet with equal equanimity. Nothing came to him amiss; whatever he undertook seemed to others to be unsuitable for him; he did not appear to fit into any picture. Perhaps it was originality, perhaps a touch of genius, or more probably merely madness.

About the beginning of September the bases and advanced bases

of the British Army were liable to sudden and frequent change; those 'somewheres in France' became so elusive that the War Office itself could hardly be relied upon to know. About September 5, the turning day of the Retreat, Piltich was at an advanced base railhead, somewhere in mid-France. At that place he made the acquaintance of Trooper (or Private—it was uncertain which) Quill, his partner in their famous Odyssey.

Their meeting took place at the local headquarters, just at the moment when Piltich emerged from the temporary Staff Offices after an unsatisfactory interview. Quill imagined that Piltich might be a Staff Officer, and, fearing no man, spoke out: 'Can you tell me, sir, if there is any chanst for me to get to the front now?'

'Tell me who and what you are,' replied Piltich, who was always willing to converse with a private soldier.

'Well, sir, I'm a reservist, come back for the war; was in the cavalry, and served in China. I'm used to 'osses in civilian life, so I'm to be employed with the Veterinary Corps; I can cure an 'oss of anything. I want to get up to the front, near the 'osses.'

'I, too, am trying to get to the front,' stated Piltich. 'I have no servant, so I hereby appoint you my temporary servant. Between us, we ought to manage to be sent up fairly soon.'

'Thank you very much, sir.'

'Perhaps you have some plan you can suggest. Two heads are better than one.'

'There is only one way, sir,' opined Quill. 'Call at the Staff Offices every 'alf hour until they 'ates the sight of you. If the Staff Officer don't see you, see anybody, if it's only his clerk.'

'You're quite right; you are a wise man. By-the-bye, what is your name?'

'Quill, sir. Herbert Quill, well known on the road as an 'andy man with 'osses, and any odd jobs.'

'Married?'

'In a manner of speaking, sir.'

'I beg your pardon, Quill.'

'Not at all, sir. I'm a modern man that 'as read a bit, economics and such like. The economic dependence of woman is shocking, sir.'

'We must think out a remedy,' remarked Piltich. 'War shakes up old institutions, and gives us a chance to improve things.'

'You is a bit of a philosopher yourself, sir, if you will permit me to say so.'

'You flatter me, Quill. I look at things in a practical way. For example, I think it is the duty of our public men to make bold experiments. Take eugenics; the handsome statesman and the beautiful actress should certainly be compelled to marry.' Piltich was embarked on a theme which he had first adumbrated as a cadet at Woolwich. He coupled the name of a blameless but good-looking public man with that of a much-divorced and fascinating actress; he discussed the subject with absolute seriousness.

'Beg pardon, sir,' interrupted Quill with a discreet cough. 'I think the time 'as come for another visit to the Staff Officer.'

It was a stroke of good fortune for both of them that brought Piltich and Quill together; they were the complements of each other. Piltich was apt to stray in thought into remote regions of speculation; Quill, trained to the road, remained always on Mother Earth,—an effective anchor. Quill was a man of thirty-five, hard and weather-beaten, with the face of the trusted retainer; he had about him that strange, indefinable aspect, common to all who make their living with horses. His brain was resourceful and quick; his experiences had been so varied that no situation ever arose for which he was unable to find some precedent to help him to a right decision. Quill was truly one of Nature's conservatives: Piltich was doctrinaire, a product of too intensive breeding.

Piltich's pertinacity in the Staff Office had one immediate result. It upset the routine and regulations to the extent of having an alteration made in the daily 'return' which was 'rendered,' as the instructions say with delightful vagueness, through 'the usual channels.' He got himself and Quill shown as 'officer and servant, available as immediate reinforcement'; everyone else was only a 'first reinforcement.' This was done by bluff, working on the mind of a clerk who did not know his regulations backwards. Piltich believed thoroughly in detachment, and generally drew himself apart in some manner. Before the boat was across the Channel, he had handed over to some guileless person the consignment of soldiers entrusted to his care; he had to be a free lance.

'Back again, are you?' said the Staff Officer, not attempting any politeness to Piltich on his sixth call, by that time late in the night. There had been a lot of work; no one knew quite what was going on, or whether the British force even existed. Here was this imbecile-looking subaltern still hanging around, impervious to rebuke. The Staff Officer had reason to be angry; he saw no prospect of sleep that night.

'Go to hell!' he snapped out to Piltich.

'I wish for permission to go to the front,' said Piltich. 'I am the officer for immediate reinforcement. I am sure that I am urgently needed.'

'Very well then, go. I don't care.'

'Very good, sir,' Piltich punctuated his words with a salute.

"I take it that I may proceed to join the *n*-th division.'

'Take any damned thing you please.'

'Thank you, sir. I can, therefore, requisition a horse and cart, as there is no transport available.'

'Go and be damned to you!' were the last words of the exhausted Staff Officer.

Quill, who was waiting outside, knew by his buoyant step that Piltich had been successful. But there were still some difficulties.

'I've been asking round, sir,' said Quill, 'and no one knows where the troops is. Somewhere nor'-east, that's all.'

'Never mind, Quill. That's quite enough for you and me; we shall find them.'

Quill felt a thrill of admiration for his master's great and resolute mind. His blood tingled at the thought that they would take the road together, the whole world of adventure before them.

'What about oats for the 'oss, sir?' inquired Quill, for Piltich had with him a charger. 'And your kit? And supplies for us, sir?'

'That magic word—requisition,' cried the joyous Piltich.

'A French word, maybe,' remarked Quill suspiciously. 'I suppose you know best, sir.'

'Requisition means, my excellent Quill, that we must find a horse and cart somewhere in this dirty town. We do not buy them, but give in exchange a scrap of paper, signed by myself; the public pays.'

'I likes the idea,' commented Quill.

'You will drive the cart, and I shall ride my charger. You can draw five days' supplies for man and beast; also load up my kit.'

'Sounds all right, sir,' said Quill. 'We've got to find the 'oss and cart first. I'm not over good at the lingo.'

Unfortunately neither Piltich nor Quill could speak French at all. Quill was able to make himself understood in ordering reasonable wants—'pain,' 'eau,' and such things—but to obtain a horse

and cart was beyond his powers of speech ; incidentally, the request was not likely to be popular.

Early the next morning Piltich started a house-to-house quest. He had bought a pronouncing dictionary and had constructed and learned by heart the Ollendorffian sentence : '*Est-ce que vous avez un cheval et une charrette ?*'

To this lucid question the answer had been on every occasion a very clear and definite : '*Mais non, monsieur.*'

After about a dozen visits, Quill, who was in attendance, felt confident that he, too, had mastered the sentence, and suggested that he might try another quarter of the town, so as to save time. They agreed upon this plan, for it did not matter even if they did get two horses and two carts.

Quill was about to go off, when a sudden inspiration came to him.

'Wouldn't it be better, sir,' he suggested, 'if we was fust to ask if they 'ad a stable ? They might think we was only looking for billets.'

'Wise and cunning man. I'll consult the dictionary.'

Together they went to a farm-like building, and asked the question : '*Est-ce que vous avez une écurie ?*'

'*Mais oui, messieurs,*' answered the owner. '*Venez voir.*' He conducted them round the premises.

'Done 'im,' whispered Quill suddenly, as he noticed a fine, strong farm cart. Likewise a horse of sorts came to light.

Piltich brought out his note-book and wrote the ominous word 'Requisition.' The owner, reading over his shoulder, gave a deep sigh of resignation, murmuring : '*Enfin, c'est la guerre ! Conspuez les Boches.*'

The horse was harnessed into the cart by Quill, who disapproved of the state and type of the foreign harness. They drove away in triumph to collect their goods.

To move in a north-easterly direction to find the *n*-th British division—that was their entire plan ; it was of Homeric simplicity. Across France in war-time to an unascertainable destination, ignorant of its language and unarmed—truly a hazardous enterprise. Without means of defence, for Piltich had always regarded his sword as an encumbrance and had left it in England ; he had been unable to obtain a revolver. It was, perhaps, verbally inexact to say that they were unarmed, since Quill had provided himself with a strange weapon, an ancient, double-edged, curved Chinese sword,

a trophy of the Boxer rebellion ; not even all the skill of Quill could rid the sword of rust. Its value to the adventurers was moral and poetic, not practical.

The first embarrassment on the journey came to them in the little country town where they decided to spend the night. It was started by the school-children, who raised vociferous cries of '*Vivent les Anglais !*' Khaki had not before been seen in that town, and the commotion engendered by the cries of the children brought out the whole population ; they at once concluded that Piltich and Quill were the harbingers of a vast British army, or possibly of the legendary 'Hindoos' about whom rumour was beginning to be busy.

At the Mairie there was an informal reception. M. le Maire pronounced an elegant but incomprehensible discourse. Piltich, seated on horseback, responded with the ritual sign, so common in France at that time ; he passed his forefinger across his throat in a manner significant of a painful end, and murmured the hated name 'Guillaume.' (The vulgar are apt to accompany this gesture with a clicking sound, made by the tongue.)

The assembly was wildly delighted. How observant these English were ! How quick to fall in with the customs of the country ! M. le Maire, himself, cried out the final phrase of the French slogan : '*À Berlin, à Berlin !*' The village idiots in chorus started to maunder what was fondly supposed to be 'Tipperary.' Nor had Quill been neglected in the proceedings. He had been presented with a bouquet of lilies by the little daughter of the notary. By way of thanks, he said in purest Parisian '*Merci,*' and, knowing France, kissed the child. Consequently he found himself compelled to go the round, kissing all the children ; there was a long *queue* of little girls waiting their turn.

Presently Piltich thought it time to come to business : '*Logement,*' he exclaimed to the Mayor. The Mayor understood at once. The entire municipal authority, together with Piltich and Quill, entered the Council Chamber, which was hung with many large maps. From the official cupboard were produced various smaller but larger-scaled maps, and also lists of citizens upon whom troops were to be billeted. It was quite a long time before Piltich could make the authorities understand that billets were required only for Quill, himself, and their horses. The Mayor was regretting profusely that they could accommodate at the most but one infantry brigade. In the end the two heroes passed the night in one of the rooms of

the Mairie, and not comfortably in a bed in a private house, as was hoped. The idea had begun to spread that they were, after all, practical jokers. They departed next morning at dawn.

In the afternoon the road led them into a forest, one of the vast thick forests of France. The trees were very tall and very straight, growing very close together; everything in the forest seemed to run in mathematical lines, the road, the trees, the intersecting drives. They were making a short halt in the midst of the forest when their ears caught unusual sounds in the distance.

'Would that be thunder, sir?' asked Quill.

'Guns,' replied Piltich.

They were silent for a moment. The sounds of battle for the first time, but how far off? It reminded them of the necessity for precaution.

'I've 'eard tell, sir,' remarked Quill, 'as 'ow in military 'istory they allus marches towards the noise of the guns.'

'Quite right. That's what we are doing.'

'Seems to me,' went on the practical-minded Quill, 'if they is firing over a front of a hundred miles, the noise ain't much 'elp as a guide.'

'Anyway, we must get along,' said Piltich. 'From now on, we must move with military precautions. You and the cart are the main body; I shall ride ahead as an advanced guard, searching any likely localities for the enemy.'

'You ain't a-going to search this 'ere wood, are you, sir?'

'Certainly not.'

'Adn't you better take the sword, sir?' inquired Quill.

'I shall rely on moral force, which is to the physical as three is to one. Besides, I have a stick.'

They had to continue the march after dusk to reach the far edge of the forest. Very tired, they settled down to bivouac for the night; they did not wish to waste energy in searching for a billet. Quill cooked a succulent meal of fried bully beef and mushrooms which he had collected on the way; as a savoury there were roast mealies, also gathered.

The next day they were definitely on the trail of British troops, as they became involved in the mesh of the food and ammunition supply of the army; heavy motors were grinding their way along the roads day and night. They were able to obtain some very vague information as to the whereabouts of the *n*-th division.

This track of an army, or rather of two armies, for the Germans

had retired and the Allies had advanced, was not a pleasant route. There were disused and unsavoury camping grounds, defaced with the remains of animals slaughtered for food; there were dead horses and dead dogs on the roadside; there was a hastily-made grave, not deep enough to be sanitary; further on, in odd, forgotten corners were unburied corpses of both friend and foe, swelling the ranks of the missing. It was War.

Towards evening they fell in with the least known and most romantic unit of the British Army, a mobile veterinary section, which happened in this case to consist of one officer, two men, three horses, and a Maltese cart. Such a unit Quill was destined to join, and it was admirably suited to his disposition. The mobile section plies between the advanced base and the fighting troops—and this one was likewise looking for the *n*-th division. The duties of the section are to collect such sick and wounded horses as are not too sick or too badly wounded, and to coax them back by road to the advanced base veterinary hospital for rest and care. During an advance the section has to catch up the armies, without knowing where they may be or where they may be going; on returning with the creaks, the section has to find an elusive advanced base. To belong to a mobile section opened up possibilities of strange adventures, and required an especial talent in the care of horses.

Piltich and the veterinary officer, Quill and the men, soon settled down into a happy family party. Quill became cook-in-chief, and Piltich guide of the party.

‘Have you heard,’ asked the veterinary officer of Piltich, ‘that they say there are still lots of Germans about here?’

‘No. Where?’

‘In the big woods, north of the village. I’m rather glad that we decided to spend the night in the village.’

‘But how can they have got there?’ asked Piltich.

‘They dodged into the woods after the Marne. I expect they are fairly hungry by now.’

‘Have you got any arms?’

‘No. I’m not supposed to be a combatant officer, you know.’

‘My servant,’ remarked Piltich, ‘has a Chinese sword which I could borrow, but I’m afraid it wouldn’t be much use against the Germans.’

Just as Piltich was going to sleep, Quill came and whispered to him: ‘Beg pardon, sir; I’ve found an arm for you. This ’ere.’ It sounded Irish, but Quill produced an excellent Uhlan lance.

'Just the thing,' said Piltich. 'I don't know how to use it, but it will have plenty of moral effect. Where did you get it?'

'Alongside an haystack outside the village. There was some talk o' Germans, but that's all I could find. I went out with my sword. Good night, sir.'

The next morning Piltich determined to reconnoitre in the direction of the woods. He mounted his horse, carrying the lance in a manner highly distasteful to his steed, a well-bred hunter from the shires who had never seen such an implement. Quill marched at his stirrup, curved sword in hand, but happily sheathed in its scabbard.

They approached a windmill which was on a little rise above the woods. Quill bared his sword and advanced cautiously, making his way along the hedgerows. Piltich was not over-comfortable, for the lance was heavy and unwieldy; he could not balance the thing properly, with the result that the butt-end kept swinging and striking his charger on the hind quarters. The noble animal snorted and fretted; finally, he started off at a canter, increasing speed to a gallop, up the grassy slopes towards the windmill. This manoeuvre had an astonishing result. There rushed out of the mill a German soldier with upraised hands, shouting 'Kamerad, Kamerad!' As a surprise attack from the flank came Quill at the double, fiercely brandishing his trusty sword; he made straight for the Teuton. 'Kamerad, Kamerad!' again wailed the unfortunate man. 'Ich bin hungrig.' With great difficulty Piltich pulled up, but Quill was on the German who had fallen on his knees expecting an instant death.

'Stay your hand, Quill,' shouted Piltich. 'Spare the wretch.'

'It's all right, sir,' shouted back Quill. 'I couldn't kill a fly with this thing.'

The German felt happier when Piltich came forward and spoke to him in his own language. He handed over to Piltich his revolver and ammunition. Piltich took them, throwing away his lance; he felt more secure. It appeared that the man, with twenty companions, had wandered through the woods for days; they were very hungry, and anxious now to surrender. Would the gracious officer kindly take them all prisoners, if he fetched them? The gracious officer's reply was in the affirmative.

It was quite true, and the twenty-one Germans were pleased to become prisoners. Quill was radiant. Into the village there marched a strange band, Quill, with sword, at the head; twenty-one

tired and dirty Germans; Piltich, mounted, revolver in hand, completed the company. The village and the mobile veterinary section greeted them with cheers. The Germans were eventually taken over by a divisional ammunition park which contained a few men with rifles. The affair caused a delay of half a day.

A certain amount of time was made up by continuing the next march into the night; but, as they came nearer to the fighting, night marching became fraught with delays and dangers from nervous sentries. These sentries, generally belonging to small supply or ammunition detachments, were always on the main road, and rapped out their aggressive challenges from dark, unexpected corners.

'Halt! 'oo goes there?' came for a fifth time.

'Gawd knows,' replied Quill, who was bored. He added: 'A travelling tinker and fam'ly, you son of a gun.'

The quite English quality of Quill's voice reconciled the sentry to the non-regulation answer; he forbore to shoot. The party found it more convenient to bivouac there for the night, for it was a supply unit, a home from home in war-time.

The next evening Piltich found the headquarters of the *n*-th divisional artillery; he was not expected, but welcomed as an immediate reinforcement, as there had been heavy losses among artillery officers. Accordingly he was sent on, and reached the headquarters of an artillery brigade at midnight. Quill was in faithful attendance to the end.

'Who the devil are you?' inquired an awakened adjutant.

'An immediate reinforcement,' retorted Piltich, 'forwarded by divisional headquarters to you.'

'Got any kit?'

'Yes; a charger, and a horse and cart as well.'

The adjutant began to take interest. A subaltern who could, in the quartermaster-sergeant's sense of the word, 'make' a horse and cart, was likely to be an acquisition.

'All right,' said the adjutant; 'you had better stay the night with us, and we'll see about posting you to a battery or somewhere in the morning.' The brigade staff was short of transport.

In the morning Piltich was duly posted as colonel's orderly officer on the brigade staff. The sad moment had come to bid farewell to Quill, who was to return to his natural habitat, the mobile veterinary section.

'Thank you very much for all your care of me, Quill,' said Piltich.

'It's nothing to speak of, sir.'

'I enjoyed our trip.'

'And so did I, sir,' rejoined Quill. 'I was thinking, maybe you'd keep this as a souvenir.' He produced the sword.

'Thank you very much, Quill, but I think it will be more useful to you than to me.'

'Perhaps you're right, sir. Good-bye, sir.'

Piltich was just reaching out to shake Quill's hand, when the movement was dramatically arrested by a weird, whirring sound over their heads. Their eyes looked up but saw nothing. There followed a scrunching crash, and a chasm opened in the road behind them, in the road which was to take Quill. It was a most astounding thing; black smoke belched up from the hole in the road, and a small cottage by the roadside had crumbled away. Piltich and Quill were now truly soldiers; they had been under fire, for the strange thing was a seventeen-inch German shell.

'I thought,' murmured Quill as he moved down the road, 'I thought it was a motor 'bus in trouble.'

ROBERT AUGUSTIN.

FROM THE LAND OF LETTERS.

My father being a bookseller, publisher, and journalist combined, as well as a writer upon many subjects, it is not surprising that some of my earliest recollections relate to books and their writers. He lived at Oxford (and I with him until his death) and had associations with the University as well as the City. Thus environment stimulated such interest in literary matters as came to me by inheritance.

A great change has come over the traffic in books since the early fifties, when the ordinary novel was issued in three volumes at 31s. 6d.—with, of course, a very restricted distribution except through the medium of circulating libraries—and the extraordinary novel (such as Thackeray and Dickens provided) in monthly shilling parts. Thackeray's monthly parts were always in bright yellow wrappers, whilst those of Dickens were of a bluish-green colour. The former, in his earlier works, furnished his own illustrations, whilst the latter relied upon Cruikshank, Hablot Browne, and others. I also remember their Christmas books with coloured plates regularly forthcoming from the same writers, and the interest they excited. Now these methods of publication on the part of our chief novelists have gone the way of the three-volume novel at 31s. 6d.

If I were asked to name the book which, within my own and I believe anyone else's time, created the greatest sensation when it was first given to the world, I should have no hesitation in replying 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' Its success was immediate and extraordinary. It was said that some provincial booksellers filled their windows with copies in the morning and were sold out by night, but I cannot vouch for the truth of this. The fact that it was one of the earliest works of fiction issued in a cheap form may have had something to do with its sales, but it went through edition after edition at varying prices in an incredibly short space of time, and occupied a position in the public mind, as a topic for conversation, attained by no book before or since. It was notable in another respect, as being one of the first novels issued with a distinct, defined purpose—the abolition of slavery—kept steadily in view all through, and to which everything else was subordinated. In these later days, fiction has frequently been used to draw public attention to national evils, but never so effectively as in the case of Mrs. Stowe's

work. As evidence of the hold it had upon the public, I may say that, as a small boy, I went to a large pleasure-fair, where four theatrical shows were all playing versions of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' that being the most attractive dramatic fare they could provide, and I saw the various characters in the book promenading on the front stages. In the old stock company days, when the manager of a theatre could not entice the public within his doors in any other way, he used to put on either 'East Lynne' or 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' either, when all else failed, being an almost certain draw. It holds provincial audiences even now, as for many years a travelling company has been, and I believe still is, playing a version of the book with the special attraction that several of the parts are sustained by real niggers.

Undoubtedly, people nowadays are much more cosmopolitan in their reading than they used to be, and a knowledge of books and their writers is much more diffused than formerly. There was then a much greater disposition on the part of those moving in the higher intellectual circles, especially, to consider that anything outside their own line of studies was not worth troubling about. This was particularly the case in our older universities, where the ordinary don lived in such an atmosphere of erudition as precluded his taking any interest in anything literary unless it directly bore upon divinity, classics, or mathematics; modern fiction being remote from his sphere of observation. A remarkable instance of this came within my own knowledge in connection with Thackeray, the great novelist, who visited Oxford in 1852, with a view to delivering there a series of lectures on 'The English Humorists.' There have been one or two incorrect versions of my story, but I can stand by my own with some confidence because I derived it directly from my father, who knew Thackeray and, in fact, made the arrangements for the delivery of the lectures, and so was acquainted with all the circumstances in relation thereto. I may add that Thackeray gave my father a synopsis of the lectures in his own handwriting, and this is enshrined among such other literary treasures as I possess.

Anyone desirous of giving any public lecture or entertainment at Oxford has first to approach the Vice-Chancellor of the University with a view to obtaining his permission. In accordance with this, the great author waited upon the august personage in question, whom I well remember, and who is immortalised in that famous novel 'Verdant Green,' which depicted Oxford undergraduate life as it was in the fifties.

Thackeray, having been shown into the Vice-Chancellor's presence, handed the latter his card and remarked that *he* was Mr. Thackeray, and waited to see what effect this announcement would have. The Vice-Chancellor not appearing to be overawed, Thackeray observed—'You know my name, no doubt.' The University dignitary, after an apparent search into the inmost recesses of his memory, remarked that he did not remember ever hearing that name before. This to Thackeray was so incredible that he could not conceive that the Vice-Chancellor had caught his name aright, so he repeated 'Mr. Thackeray,' and added, to make the matter quite clear, 'the novelist, you know.' The Vice, having seemingly braced himself up for a supreme effort of memory, but without avail, thought the time had arrived when he might elicit some information from the applicant himself, so, in order to enlighten the situation, he said in the blandest of tones, 'I cannot recall your name. Are you, sir, a member of the University?' Thackeray, who had never before had the wind so taken out of his sails, almost gasped for breath. But still he had a trump card left, which he had been accustomed to consider would carry all before it wherever the English language was spoken. So, with a quiet smile of supreme confidence, he simply ejaculated "'Vanity Fair," you know!' Then at last, to his relief, a look of awakened intelligence manifested itself upon the Vice-Chancellor's countenance, and Thackeray awaited the effusive outburst which would make amends for all. It came in the words—'Yes, yes, I have heard of "Vanity Fair," of course; it is mentioned in the "Pilgrim's Progress."'

This was the last straw, and Thackeray gave it up as a bad job, and contented himself with a request, humbly preferred, and without any further reference to the personality of the lecturer, that he might be allowed to deliver his series of lectures. As the guardian of University law and order had no reason to suppose that the discipline of the place would be prejudicially affected thereby, he graciously gave the requisite permit, and Thackeray went on his way, not exactly rejoicing, but in a state of marvel passing all understanding.

This story may sound incredible nowadays, but I could cap it with others of the same period. It must be borne in mind that the typical don of that day took little cognisance of any world of letters outside his own particular sphere. A work of fiction did not appeal to him unless it were written in a dead language. Now all this is changed, and, as like as not, you will meet the author of the latest

masterpiece of fiction at the social board of a Head of a House. Jowett may be said to have done more than anyone else to break down the artificial barriers which separated the University, as represented by its accredited heads, from the outer world.

When next Thackeray appeared in Oxford, which was in 1857, it was to make an appeal to the citizens for their suffrages, confident that, at any rate, they could not know less about him than did the University, as expressed by its official mouthpiece. This was a notable election on account of the personality of the two men who fought it, namely Thackeray and the late Viscount Cardwell (afterwards the author of the first great army scheme of my own time). I could tell a good deal about this election, in which as a boy I took a vast interest, but, as Rudyard Kipling would say, 'that is another story.' Suffice to say that the town did not appreciate Thackeray sufficiently to send him to Parliament, and the world is to be congratulated upon it, for it would have lost more than it would have gained. Thackeray was no orator, for he had a singularly ineffective delivery and no command of that species of platform language which sways an audience, so no one need regret that he failed to obtain entrance to the House. To attempt to divert the genius of so great a master in his own line into another channel was a mistake that was happily averted by the 'Divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will.' He could hardly have been a success in the heated atmosphere of politics, whereas he enriched the world with what only he could give as he sat in after-years in the quiet of his own study.

Thackeray renewed his public acquaintance with Oxford a few years afterwards when he appealed to Gown and Town alike. He was announced to deliver that lecture from his series upon the Four Georges which related to George IV. As may be remembered, Thackeray did not mince matters in his estimate either of that monarch or of his aristocratic friends. The period embraced by the lecture was then sufficiently near our own time to connect some of those who were pursuing their studies at Oxford by no distant ties of relationship with certain of the noblemen reflected upon by Thackeray. Consequently, after the lecture was announced it began to be rumoured that it was intended to make it somewhat warm for the eminent novelist when he started to discuss the characters of particular individuals. Undergraduates, as is generally known, are no respecters of persons upon such occasions, and could make themselves exceedingly disagreeable, to say the least, if they were so minded.

They mustered in good force at the lecture, and having greeted Thackeray in a friendly spirit enough when he came upon the platform, waited for developments. The lecturer was not long in supplying one, for he at once disarmed opposition by expressing his great regret that his portmanteau containing his lecture on George IV. had most unfortunately miscarried in the train, so that he would be unable to deliver that lecture.

Fortunately, however, he had the manuscript of his lecture on George II. with him, and he would therefore give them that instead, which he forthwith proceeded to do. The general impression was that either the railway or the lecturer exercised a very wise discretion in the matter. A discourse upon George III. even might have been a little risky, but his predecessor and his court were too much in the shadowy past for any strictures upon them to ruffle undergraduate susceptibilities. So, although the audience generally did not feel quite so interested in the second Hanoverian as they would have been in the fourth, they bore their disappointment with equanimity, and nothing occurred to cause any undue excitement.

I will add a final reminiscence of Thackeray because it will illustrate a special phase of his character. He has been described by some as apt to be a little impatient and overbearing; and in argument perhaps he was. He had his weaknesses, like the rest of us. But those best acquainted with him knew that if, in a moment of irritation, he unintentionally did an injustice in word or deed, he was the first to endeavour to repair it afterwards. He and my father once had a considerable difference of opinion. Under a mistaken impression, Thackeray in the heat of the moment made use of an expression which implied a doubt as to my father's good faith, and the discussion came to an abrupt conclusion in consequence. A few hours afterwards I remember Thackeray hurrying back to our dining-room, having in the meantime learned the true state of the case. Seizing my father by the hand, he said in the old-world and delightful phraseology characteristic of his writings, 'Friend, I have wronged thee and I have come back to say so.' It need hardly be said how heartily the other responded, or how much it intensified his respect for the chivalrous nature of the great writer, who was not above admitting an error and making amends for it. Many a lesser man would have hesitated to thus come down of his own free will and accord from his pinnacle in such a case. But that was Thackeray all over.

Of the other great novelist of the Victorian period, Dickens, I

can also say something, because my father had business associations with him as well as with Thackeray. Dickens, like Thackeray, had a desire to appear on an Oxford platform, and my father was the medium for compassing this. It was when the late King Edward VII. then Prince of Wales, was pursuing his studies at Oxford that Dickens wished to give a reading there, hoping and anticipating that the Heir-Apparent, who had never heard him read, would be pleased to be present. He was not disappointed in this, for arrangements were made for his Royal Highness to attend, the night fixed being November 5, 1859. After the public announcements of this had been issued, some of Dickens' London friends assured him that it would not be safe to have it then as it was Guy Fawkes night, when law and order were set so much at defiance at Oxford that no respectable person could venture out after dark on that night when 'gown and town' were settling their differences. Things were not really so bad as all this, but, as no one wanted to run risks when such distinguished personages as the Heir-Apparent and a great author were concerned, the date was altered. The Town Hall was the scene of the reading, and in those days, people, I suppose, being less luxurious than they are now, the seating accommodation consisted merely of long forms even in the highest-priced parts of the room. An hour or two before the hour—eight o'clock—fixed for the reading, it suddenly dawned upon some one that his Royal Highness, by virtue of his exalted position, might expect something better than a form to sit on, so a messenger was despatched post-haste to my father's house to beg for the loan of an arm-chair for the Prince. My father gladly complied by sending one of his dining-room arm-chairs, of that Early Victorian type represented by mahogany and horse-hair. I am pleased to say that that historic piece of furniture is still in the family, for I am the present possessor of the chair in which the late King Edward sat when he first heard Charles Dickens read.

Owing to my father's influence, I was allotted a seat on one of the aforesaid forms only two or three rows behind the Prince. The latter had so recently come into residence that he had not previously attended any form of public entertainment at Oxford, and we were all somewhat puzzled to know how we ought to receive him, for it must be borne in mind that, in those days, we did not see so much of royalty as we do now. Some thought that everyone ought to rise when he entered the room, while others contended that a bashful youth would feel uncomfortable at such an attention and would prefer to be allowed to glide in without attracting any

particular attention. However, the matter settled itself in the most natural way, for the moment his figure appeared in the doorway everyone present rose and remained standing until he had taken his seat. He was accompanied by his governor (General Bruce) and Mrs. Bruce, an equerry, and his tutor—a more formidable entourage than is considered necessary nowadays for a Prince of Wales *in statu pupillari* when he is participating in social functions.

I was only a small boy at the time, but the remembrance of that night will remain with me as long as memory lasts. The reading consisted of 'The Christmas Carol' and 'The Trial, from "Pickwick."' I can still see, in my mind's eye, the great novelist, with an ivory paper-knife in his hand—the one accessory he allowed himself—seated at the little desk unfolding that exquisite story, wondrous in its humour and its pathos, as we listened spell-bound. At one moment I was in tears, at another convulsed with laughter. I can never forget how wonderfully he brought out every point and every little detail; it seemed such a revelation of the author's mind and of his dramatic power. He had histrionic as well as literary genius, and would have been a great actor had he elected to devote himself to the stage instead of literature. He held his audience in the hollow of his hand from start to finish, and he had disappeared from the platform before we were sufficiently recovered to give way to our pent-up enthusiasm and call him back to receive it. 'The Trial, from "Pickwick,"' formed the second part of the programme, and enjoyable as it was to listen to the rendering of so delightful a piece of unbridled comedy from the lips of the author himself, my mind was too full of 'The Christmas Carol' to find room for much else. It is almost unnecessary to say that the Prince conveyed to Dickens in gracious terms the great enjoyment he had derived from his efforts. I afterwards heard Dickens read 'The Story of Little Dombey' and 'Mrs. Gamp,' and appreciated them to the full, but it is the 'Carol' that stands out in my mind as the masterpiece of elocutionary feeling.

I have only one pang in connection with Thackeray and Dickens. My father parted with his correspondence with both of them, when I was too young to stay his hand, by handing over all the letters he had from them to some autograph-hunter, in ignorance of the fact that, in after-years, I was going to be an enthusiastic collector of all such things. However, I obtained one or two interesting epistles of Dickens from other sources, and one is worth reproducing, because it shows the great writer in such a charming light. Dickens, when he

wrote the letter was editor of 'Household Words,' and anyone who has ever held a similar office can testify to the cares and anxieties which wait upon it, and the oftentimes trying and heart-breaking work of plodding through the MSS. of budding writers in the hope of discovering a grain of gold amid much dross. One can fancy what this must have meant to a man with the imaginative power and such a mastery of English as Dickens. Yet he not only did not shirk it, but there are many instances of the kindly consideration he had for young writers and his real desire to help them. The letter in question is an example of his painstaking conscientiousness, and of the time and trouble he would bestow in showing a young writer where he was at fault. A personal friend had sent him a contribution from a lady in the hope that he might find it suitable for the pages of the magazine, and no doubt the would-be contributor trusted that the medium through which her MS. was transmitted to the editor would help it on its way to publication. Dickens did not content himself with the brief intimation 'Declined with thanks,' but, with a kindly conscientiousness, discharged his duty in a much less perfunctory way, as the following letter shows. The term 'Gentle Reader,' to which he takes so much exception, was one very much in vogue with some writers at that time.

'Office of "Household Words,"

'A weekly Journal conducted by Charles Dickens.

'No. 16, Wellington Street North, Strand.

'Monday, Twenty-eighth February, 1853.

'MY DEAR ———, —It is my misfortune that I can only consider papers offered for insertion here with one plain and direct reference to their suitability to these pages. If I could take any other circumstances into account, I should have a prodigious staff of contributors of great merit in various other capacities, but unfortunately possessing such slender pretensions to appear in print that they would very speedily settle this benevolent Journal.

'The lady who has written the paper I unwillingly return appears to me to have some talent for description, but I am afraid she does not quite distinguish between what is easily written and what is easy writing. A world of patience, labour, and care separates the two. The paper contains a quantity of words and a mustard seed of matter. The constant address to the reader is a tiresome avoidance of any art in saying what is to be said, of which we have the most wearisome experiences here at least a hundred times a week. But the boy and his mother are very well observed and very well described; and if the sketch had in it any other phases of peasant life, of equal merit in the setting forth, I should be glad

to accept it. I don't know what the lady may be able to tell in this regard, nor would I by any means urge her to try once more, for she might well be wide of the mark. But I feel it right to say this much. I would advise her, further, for ever and a day to dismiss the Gentle Reader as a monster of the Great Mud Period, who has no kind of business on the face of the literary earth; to remember, if she sit down to write for a Journal like this, that she is just an English woman, writing the English language for a large English audience, and to consider whether she cannot get on in such an aim without German lines and French words; to forget herself as utterly as the Gentle Reader, and only to remember what she is describing.

'Faithfully yours always,

'CHARLES DICKENS.'

Another letter I have from Dickens was written after his falling out with the publishers of 'Household Words,' which resulted in his starting 'All the Year Round,' and the letter is dated from that office. At that time there were no Government grants made for the promotion of technical education, and, in order to provide it on the cheap, teachers and others were asked to give gratuitous instruction in their leisure time for the benefit of the other working-classes. This was abhorrent to Dickens, who always laid it down that the labourer was worthy of his hire, and he was the last man to be a party to robbing Peter in order to pay Paul. A certain Mr. Langford Eymie, LL.D., wrote to ask Dickens to advocate this giving of something for nothing in the pages of his magazine, and this is the answer he got, which, like all Dickens' communications, does not lack definiteness:—

'Office of "All the Year Round,"
Thursday, November 25, 1869.

'DEAR SIR,—It appears to me that the non-payment of the teachers, in the case you so well set forth, is a point of vital weakness in the case. They have as good a right to be paid for their labour as the Working Man has to be paid for his; and they are not, in their degree, really better paid than he is. I must say that if technical education be of such importance to these recipients as they feel it to be, they are not truly independent (to my thinking) when they take it for nothing from men who can very indifferently afford to give it. And even if they were all men of fortune who could well afford it, the principle would be no less objectionable.

'For this reason I cannot call attention to the effort with unqualified praise.

'Faithfully yours,

'CHARLES DICKENS.'

There is good common-sense and honest principle in this letter, and it is just as applicable now as it was when it was written.

How real Dickens made his creations to his readers was brought home to me once when I was present at a banquet in the room immortalised as the scene of the celebrated ball described in the 'Pickwick Papers,' at the Bull Inn at Rochester. A gentleman sitting next to me was so permeated with the *genius loci*, so realistically did the author bring home the incident to him, that he said to me 'Only to think that Mr. Pickwick *actually* danced in this very room!'

One of the oldest of libraries can furnish evidence of the universality of the appeal to the imagination Dickens made in his books. At the Bodleian Library there is a copy of the 'Pickwick Papers' in the Russian language which was presented to the Library by an English officer, who found it in the knapsack of a dead Russian soldier who fell in the attack upon the Redan by the British troops during the Crimean War. It is difficult to imagine a foreigner entirely appreciating the cockneyisms of Sam Weller and the truly British peculiarities of the other characters, but the interest of the story and its humorous incidents make an appeal to every nationality and testify to the cosmopolitan nature of the writer's genius. There is, however, a pathos in the thought of the poor Russian soldier, who so appreciated Dickens that his work was his companion on his campaign, falling by the hand of the author's countrymen.

Another giant in the Victorian realm of fiction of whom I saw something was Charles Reade, the author of 'The Cloister and the Hearth,' 'It's Never Too Late to Mend,' and other works which will be remembered when many of the present-day novels are forgotten. Reade, though a very unequal writer, possessed dramatic power and intensity, coupled with immense ingenuity and power of conception in the rapid development of incident, and is entitled to be regarded as one of the typical writers in the front rank of Victorian novelists. I came into personal conflict with him once in my young days, and so can include him among my personal reminiscences. At the time, I was an assistant at the Bodleian Library, and during a portion of each evening I was in charge of its reading-room, known as the 'Camera.' Charles Reade, who was a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, was an indefatigable worker in collecting and verifying information which he used in building up his stories, and the Bodleian bookshelves were frequently drawn upon for this purpose. While he would have a number of books reserved for his

use, he only consulted them at irregular intervals : that is to say, he would come one evening and then two or three evenings would elapse before he put in another appearance. During one of these interregnums an undergraduate unwittingly took possession of the desk previously used by the distinguished author, who on arrival found the place so occupied. Furious at such a sacrilegious proceeding, he made for me like a bull at a gate and loudly demanded what I meant by allowing anyone to sit in his chair. He was a tall, fine man, who towered above me in his wrath, and, somewhat taken aback, I began to explain, when, in stentorian tones, he asked me if I was aware who he was ? Before I could answer, he said ' I am Charles Reade,' and waited to see the petrifying effect it would have upon me. I did not at once fall as though smitten by a thunderbolt, but plucked up courage to say that it was quite impossible to prevent readers taking unoccupied seats, and that it was one of my instructions that no particular seats were to be reserved for anybody. This only added fuel to the flame, and he demanded the name of the too-daring spirit who had ensconced himself in the lion's lair. On my vouchsafing the information, he responded with—' And pray is he such a man as Charles Reade ? I never heard of him before.' This was uttered with such stern emphasis that it has never left my memory. The end of it was he stalked out of the place with the injured dignity of one suffering under a grievous affront, leaving me, metaphorically, ' all of a heap.'

But ' All's well that ends well,' and there was a happy sequel, with more than a sufficient solatium for any wounded feelings I may have had. When the late Henry Haines, my superior, who took on the charge of the building later in the evening, arrived, I duly reported what had happened, and, very irate with the novelist, he expressed his intention of ' going for him ' at the first opportunity. Knowing something of Reade's temperament, we both thought that he would probably have simmered down and repented by the morning, and I saw a legitimate chance of compassing an end thereby. At that time I was, and have been ever since, an enthusiastic collector of autographs of notable people, under which category the author in question distinctly came, so we hatched a little plot. Haines, when he saw Reade, was to pile up the agony, so far as my injured feelings were concerned, and when the requisite height had been reached he was to suggest to the author that he should make amends by presenting me with his autograph. This, as I pointed out, would not only amply compensate me but would

convey a delicate compliment to the novelist by showing the value attached to his signature. All fell out as was anticipated; Haines did full justice to his case, and Charles Reade became sufficiently remorseful, and so desirous of making honourable amends that he was only too ready to do so in the way proposed. The result, which he desired should be handed to me, is enshrined among many similar treasures in my collections, and on one of the Bodleian blank catalogue-slips of the period, in the big, bold calligraphy of the author, with a fine flourish attached to the signature, runs the legend :

‘ Here Mr. Haines,
Though not worth the pains,
Is the autograph of
Charles Reade.’

The writer was known as one of those large-hearted but impetuous spirits whose feelings, when they were particularly moved, were too strong to admit of repression. Then, like many others upon whom the divine *afflatus* has descended, his own personality loomed large within him. But his bark was always far worse than his bite.

I have referred to Thackeray, Dickens, and Reade more particularly because they represented the social-reform side of literature at this period, and left their own mark upon it in this direction. Thackeray was a stern moralist, who dissected the characters of our immediate predecessors as a warning to us and did his best to point out the ignominy of cant and humbug. Dickens, in ‘Nicholas Nickleby’ and in ‘Hard Times,’ laid bare the evils of our educational and our poor-law systems, and in other of his writings showed himself a social reformer of the most enthusiastic type. Charles Reade, in a lesser degree, followed in these footsteps, and did much by his writings to call attention to the defects in our treatment of the criminal and the insane.

To these must be added one who exercised a powerful influence, although in a somewhat different sphere and in other directions from those named—viz. Ruskin. He took the world by storm with his ‘Modern Painters,’ which may be said to have created nothing less than a complete revolution in modern art and the estimation of artistic qualities, and then he developed into an ardent reformer, dealing with most of the great social problems of the age in which he lived.

I first beheld his face in the early fifties, when, as a small boy, my

father took me to hear him deliver a lecture to working-men engaged in erecting the University Museum at Oxford, in which he impressed upon them the dignity, the very sacredness, of their calling. Then, years after, I heard him lecture on Art before a distinguished University audience and when no lecture-room was large enough to accommodate all who flocked to hear him. At that time his influence was at its zenith, and his own ascendancy as well as the ardour of his disciples were on one occasion somewhat comically illustrated. Ruskin in one of his lectures intimated that it would be much better if young men, when they took their physical exercise, brought their muscles to bear upon works of general utility, instead of devoting themselves to cricket, boating, and such vanities. He suggested road making and repairing as a good form of undergraduate employment for leisure hours, and pointed out a particular spot about two miles out of Oxford as affording a favourable field for operations. Thereupon the more enthusiastic of his votaries took pick, spade, and barrow and proved the sincerity of their hero-worship by literally 'working like navvies' day after day in the interval between luncheon and dinner. Ruskin, when he selected the spot in question, certainly had a keen eye for a bad road,—if the collection of ruts and irregularities, which resembled a ploughed field in summer and a bog in winter, could be properly described as a road at all. But Ruskin practised what he preached, for I have his own authority for saying that, in order the better to show his pupils how to break stones in the most approved method, he took lessons in the art from a professional stone-breaker and practised them on a stone-heap by the side of his instructor on the Iffley Road, near Oxford. One fine afternoon I walked over to Ferry Hincksey, where the amateur road-makers were at work, to see how they were getting on. I found a round dozen of them hard at it. There had been twenty or thirty engaged, but some had tailed off before I arrived. They were under the superintendence of 'a practical gardener,' specially selected for the post by the Art Professor himself. Most of the amateurs were in boating costume, and the broidery on their jerseys betokened that Balliol College had furnished the largest contingent of workers. They were nearly all rather slightly built and very young-looking even for undergraduates, but though lacking the physique, muscular development, and unshaven aspect of the professional navvy, they swung their picks and trundled their barrows as though their bread depended upon their exertions. I was not sufficiently acquainted with the mysteries of road-making to be

able to give a pronouncement upon their proceedings, but I had the benefit of the criticism of a gentleman in corduroys who, sitting upon an adjacent fence, scornfully delivered himself thus:—'Call that makin' a road? Why they're puttin' all the soft at bottom and the hard at top!' The work of road renovation was not completed when the long vacation set in, and ere term came round again either the zeal for road-making had evaporated or undergraduate energy had found a new vent. The general impression, however, was that the last state of that road was worse than the first, but this seems impossible. We may well doubt the wisdom of the road-making development of Ruskinism, but at any rate it testified to the influence of the teacher.

Ruskin's lectures were full of startling surprises, and kept the listeners in a continual state of pleasant curiosity as to what in the world he would say next. Only one thing was quite certain, viz. that you would not hear what you might expect. The spur of the moment was a much more important factor in the case than the subject announced in the printed notice. But matter and manner, however unpremeditated, were always delightful.

I have two or three letters from Ruskin, giving directions as to some drawings, and the minutiae of detail in these letters corresponds with that in his books. He was distinctly a man of moods, and when he was in one of these he would express himself with refreshing frankness. In a postscript to one of his letters in my possession he says:

'Thank you for kind invitation, but I go nowhere just now, being unwell, and sulky, and not able to speak.'

In another letter addressed to Robert Browning he said:

'I don't see any use in poetry. They say you are writing more poetry. I daresay I shall be very glad of this—some day—but I don't care just now.'

It is something to have seen such a man in the flesh and to have heard his voice. He dwells in my memory, as I saw him pacing that loveliest of streets, 'The High' at Oxford; an appropriate setting for such an embodiment of philosophic refinement. Mentally preoccupied, and taking little heed of what was passing around him, he walked with slow and measured step, with his hands behind his back underneath his academics, and with a slight forward bend of the body. Thus he always struck one as being not unlike a dignified

bird, the projection of the gown being suggestive of the tail. His dress was careful and precise, and he invariably wore a bright blue scarf with a pin in the centre. When lecturing, he walked up and down the platform very much like a caged lion, and, as he warmed up to his subject and dealt blows right and left at what he considered the weaknesses and foibles of the time, the force and determination of look and manner were in striking contrast to his calm placidity at ordinary times.

Time has been described as 'the most searching of critics,' and the writers to whom reference has been made, as well as not a few of their contemporaries, have up to now successfully stood this test, and seem likely to continue to do so until long after the present generation has ceased to interest itself in books. No doubt 'distance lends enchantment to the view,' but, as one looks back through a somewhat long vista of years, one wonders whether the glorious record of the Victorian era in literature will ever be surpassed, for the number and brilliancy of its constellations render it worthy to be recalled in the same breath as that of Elizabeth and Anne. We have, however, one great and immeasurable advantage nowadays in the marvellous cheapness of good books, inasmuch as a score of standard works by the greatest writers of any period can be purchased for less than the price formerly paid for one. This is no small gain, enabling, as it does, every section of the community to have a direct participation in a glorious heritage.

THOS. F. PLOWMAN.

THE MILITARY TRADITIONS OF CANADA.

BY A. G. BRADLEY.

THE prodigious material development of Canada within the last two decades has apparently effaced whatever recollections might have lingered in the Mother Country that, as regards her English-speaking provinces, she was the offspring of war, and was virtually founded and settled by soldiers. In the whole flood of oratory and fugitive literature that during the last twenty years has been expended on the subject, there has been rarely even a trace of any recognition of the dramatic origin and early history of British Canada. The death of Wolfe at Quebec is, of course, a familiar historical landmark. But that epoch-making event has no direct connection with the subject of this paper, which is not concerned with the simpler story of the French Canadians, and the ancient Province still mainly occupied by them. I have some reason to believe that an overwhelming proportion of educated Englishmen think vaguely of British Canada as a country built up from the start, after the manner of Australia and New Zealand, by successive waves of sturdy immigrants from Great Britain and elsewhere. I do not think it is presumptuous to assume that many readers of the 'CORNHILL' will be surprised to hear that immigrants from Britain, other than officials, had very little to do with the making of British Canada, and that it was not till the latter had been British for half a century, and had fought the United States through a long and successful war, in which the French Canadians took little active part, that the Briton from home began to form an appreciable element in the population.

It is with British Canada alone, then, using the above term in its modern inclusive sense, that this paper is concerned—in other words, the old Provinces of Upper Canada (Ontario), Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and little Prince Edward Island; and none of these, save as a refuge for deported Highland clansmen, became a recognised field for emigration till after Waterloo. The reasons for this were many and sufficient, even had the strain of the Napoleonic wars allowed of any appreciable exodus from England. The great

slump after the Peace of 1815, however, let loose a flood of emigration to Canada, individual, co-operative, charitable, and also military by means of land-grants to officers and soldiers. The old-country emigrant of that day found himself among a people numbering in all probably 200,000, of whom the great bulk were American by birth or descent, and marked by those characteristics of speech, manner, and outlook that had long distinguished in varying degrees the old American colonists. In other respects, however, he found the predominant element more British than the British themselves, passionately devoted to monarchy and fiercely anti-Republican. And these, I trust, it is needless to say, represented the loyalist refugees expelled from the old American colonies which the fate of war had transformed into the United States. The middle-aged and the elderly had themselves fought or suffered for the Crown through those seven years of what, for them at least, was civil war in its bitterest form, and now after thirty years all alike had just emerged from another three years' struggle, not of their seeking, with their old foes and persecutors, who had followed them into the wilderness, where, under the British flag, they had begun life again, amid conditions that had been always hard and sometimes tragic. Even in the interval the shadow of coming war had hung over their laborious days incessantly. The French Revolution, with its disturbing effect on their uneasy bed-fellows, the French Canadians, and worse still the violent, unreasoning, anti-British feeling that seethed throughout the greater half of the United States, had left little peace of mind for those responsible for Canada, which Great Britain sometimes would not and sometimes could not effectively garrison.

The disappointment of the Americans at having failed to annex the British Provinces to the North and free their borders from the monarchical bogey was intensely keen. The results of the French Revolution and the ravings of Jefferson stimulated still further this not unnatural longing for the acquisition of Canada, though, happily for us, they brought reaction to a sober but important minority. The correspondence of the Canadian governors through nearly all these intervening years is that of men perpetually harassed by forebodings and seated always upon a volcano. War sooner or later seemed inevitable, and, short of a miracle, could have only one result, unless the defence of Canada was taken seriously by the Home Government. The Colonial governors were right in the first and wrong in the second forecast; but they could not have foreseen that Napoleon's performances would

bring New England to her senses, and that she would not merely denounce but virtually reject all part and lot in the war. Fortunately for us!

English historians are so obviously bored by the war of 1812-15 that in the brief space perfunctorily conceded to it they save themselves the trouble of investigation, and frankly follow the old-fashioned American histories which could not afford to be candid, and are in fact to-day regarded with contempt by American experts. English moderns, unfortunately, if allusion to the unfamiliar topic becomes imperative (in a leading article for instance) almost invariably give themselves away as victims, through their school text-books no doubt, of the old American presentation of the subject, which erred in the direction of *suppressio veri* rather than in actual misstatement. It is irritating to find Englishmen of light and learning half apologising for the war of 1812-15 as a mutual blunder, as if Great Britain, with Napoleon on her hands and no conceivable object to serve by war, had not done her utmost to keep out of it! Or, again, to be told that it decided nothing and had best be forgotten, that it was ruinous to the trade of both countries, which is true, and finally that while the British had the best of the land fighting the Americans had the advantage at sea, which is a half truth of the most misleading kind. That is, I think, the conventional view so far as anyone concerns himself with a view at all. J. R. Green, the historian, whose perfunctory pages on this tiresome and unfamiliar subject, like his chapter on the Wolfe exploit, are full of errors, goes even further, and holds that the ill success of the Americans on land was 'more than made up for by their victories at sea,' alluding to those three or four notable frigate duels, which as mere incidents made a sensation, but were of no more real consequence than so many international boat-races! It is quite certain that the Americans of that day did not consider British North America as of less value than, say, four British frigates, and British North America was the real object of the war with the party that waged it, representing a majority of the nation!¹ No one can have studied the papers, the

¹ Like Green and others, British writers still periodically apologise for the burning of the Government buildings at Washington in 1814 quite obviously unconscious of the context. This measure was ordered by the British Government in retaliation for the deliberate burning of the New Capitol of Upper Canada (Toronto) and the wanton and cruel burning, on evacuation, of the former capital town of Newark, whereby hundreds of women and children were, without notice, precipitated into the terrors of a Canadian winter night. Human life and private property were scrupulously respected in the Washington affair.

letters, the private correspondence, and the general atmosphere of that period beyond the Atlantic, and hold any other opinion. The Federal party, represented chiefly by New England, did not mince their words, and declaimed against the war, in and out of Congress, as 'a wicked and unscrupulous attack upon an unoffending neighbouring and kindred people,' and fortunately acted up to their opinions, kept virtually out of it, and thereby relieved the whole international boundary east of Montreal from war's alarms.

The British Orders-in-Council and 'the right of search' served their turn well as pretexts,¹ but if there had been no '*on to Canada*' cry to rouse the enthusiasm and cupidity of the 'war-hawks' of the Southern and Middle States there would certainly have been no war. And, by an irony of fate, it was Canada alone who came well out of it! Her inherited military traditions were intensified and perpetuated. Upper Canada, as the chief seat of war, suffered to be sure from ravage, not a vital matter to an agricultural colony only thirty years old. But then her loyalist settlers, fighting by the side of that indomitable handful of British troops whose heroic performances have been obscured by remoteness of scene and the great collateral struggle with Napoleon in Europe, covered themselves with glory. French Canada, willing enough, but not seriously touched, nor much involved in the fighting line, made money hand over fist from the high prices and brisk demand for food supplies. The British loyalist settlers, who, numerically and otherwise, dominated the Maritime Provinces, also untouched by war, did still better, and in providing all kinds of war supplies and naval stores to British fleets, as well as in constituting a base for the profitable privateering interest, leaped at once into an altogether higher plane of prosperity. The Americans, on the other hand, and in an only less degree the Mother Country, suffered incalculable commercial loss.

No American writer of repute any longer defends that ghastly and impolitic error, the cruel expulsion of the loyalists. Nor does retribution often come quite so thoroughly and quite so swiftly in real life as it came with the war of 1812-15.

And now who were these makers of British Canada, these

¹ These were revoked four days after Madison's declaration of war, which the British Government, of course, knew nothing of. The British commander in Canada on hearing the news secured a brief cessation of the incipient hostilities for discussing the changed situation. But the war party at Washington wanted war—and Canada—and declined further diplomacy.

United Empire Loyalists whose descendants to-day form at least half the population of the Maritime Provinces, and within easy memory were still conspicuous and powerful among the leading class of a far less homogeneous Ontario ?

At the close of the American War, some 90,000 [loyalists, with little more than the clothes they stood up in, were huddled within the British lines at New York and one or two other Atlantic ports not yet surrendered. We can merely deal here in rough facts and approximate figures, and must altogether dispense with the moving details of this tragic business. But it will be enough that a final decree of expulsion and confiscation, which no protest of the British nor even of the French Crown, nor yet the disapproval of Washington himself could shake, had gone forth against all who had supported by arms and all who had openly sympathised with the British cause. Passions, to be sure, inflamed by the mutual retaliations of a long fluctuating war, had risen to fever heat between the two contending parties among the colonists. But one cannot help remembering the different terms and treatment extended to the defeated Royalists in our own Civil War, and in a century presumably less merciful and enlightened. Of the 50,000 expatriated and ruined loyalists, mainly non-combatants, who turned their despondent steps away to Florida, the West Indies, the Mother Country, and elsewhere, under almost always distressing circumstances, we can say nothing here.¹ But when every effort of the British Government to get living terms in the treaty of peace for its American supporters failed, there seemed only one method of solution for the harrowing problem which confronted it.

Now Nova Scotia, then including New Brunswick, had already a few thousand settlers, British, Colonial-Americans, Swiss, and French-Acadians, with a government and capital at Halifax, but was still in the main a forest wilderness. Canada west of Montreal, the then limit of serious French settlement, or in other words what is now the fine province of Ontario, was one vast virgin forest. The American colonists had vaguely regarded these countries as forbidding lands of fog, ice, and snow, climatically impossible and agriculturally useless, though Nova Scotia had proved itself, to the few familiar with it, to be a habitable country. Govern-

¹ As a matter of fact this group, unlike the other, Canadian one, has vanished unrecorded into space. The record of their numbers and their various points of refuge alone remains.

ment experts, now despatched to the forests that covered the north shores of Lakes Ontario and Erie, reported favourably of the soil. So Crown surveyors were set to work, and lands were offered in both these widely-sundered regions to all such loyalist refugees as were prepared to accept them. Transport thither, together with farming implements and rations for two years, were included in the scheme. There was, in truth, little alternative for these brave, unfortunate people. 'Hell or Halifax,' in the catch phrase of the moment, represented their forlorn outlook. It seemed, in truth, a dismal prospect, above all for the many gently-nurtured people included in the exodus, once-opulent merchants, big landowners, judges, professors, clergymen, lawyers, doctors, and the like. For the loyalist cause had naturally made a strong appeal to the higher class in the various colonies, who had a keener sense of fidelity to the Crown and the Empire and a natural dread of the democratic upheaval which accompanied rather than incited the Revolution, and indeed, as we know, sometimes hampered its leaders and imperilled its success. Sir Guy Carleton (Wolfe's old friend), as commander of the British forces during the peace negotiations and withdrawal of the troops, had now these hapless people on his hands. His letters home are full of generous compassion for the tragedy of their situation. Shipping had to be supplied for some 30,000 who decided for Nova Scotia; while most of the 10,000 or so who chose Upper Canada (Ontario) and certain available strips of Quebec went by the lake, river, and overland trails. Some had already found their way there, to be temporarily provided for by that kind-hearted Anglo-Swiss Governor, General Haldimand. The wearisome and often perilous journeys of these exiles and their families, by canoe, batteau, and waggon, through the Northern wilderness, along the various trails of the old French wars, form one of the salient features in the grim story of this wholesale expatriation compared with which the expulsion of the Acadian peasants of thirty years earlier, even as idealised by Longfellow, was a trifling incident. The evacuation by the British troops of New York was postponed again and again by Carleton under the protests of Congress, so great was the difficulty of providing ships for the transport of so many thousand exiles. And Carleton, moved to the heart by their forlorn situation, had bluntly refused to embark a single redcoat until the last one of them had been removed. It should be mentioned, too, that in the interval attempts had been made

by some to return to their old localities in spite of the fact that their lands and goods had long been appropriated, sometimes sold by the authorities, sometimes coolly annexed by unprincipled neighbours, while they themselves were regarded as pariahs and outlaws. In short, repatriation proved hopeless under the prevailing temper, and, as already shown, no government nor State provision for just treatment worth the paper it was written on could be wrung from the Americans at the Peace.

Most of these people were of American birth—New Englanders, New Yorkers, Virginians, Carolinians. There were Highlanders too, of recent settlement, Germans of both home and American birth, and New Yorkers of old Dutch extraction, but the mass were of British descent. Nearly all the males of eligible age had fought through the war in one or other of the Colonial regiments, raised and paid by the Crown. These regiments, with their connections, went collectively into exile and were allotted separate tracts divided into individual grants, varying from 3000 acres for a field officer to 200 acres for a private. These were known as Incorporated settlements, and seven such were planted along the shores of Lake Ontario, about Kingston, and others at Niagara. The non-regimental groups were known as Unincorporated settlements. This is interesting, as it was upon these same Ontario and Niagara shores that, thirty years later, the brunt of war fell. In Nova Scotia, including Cape Breton island and its mainland portion, soon after formed into the province of New Brunswick, the original plan of settlement was much the same. But the Ontario settlements were all upon good land, fearful as were the hardships encountered in its development, so there was no motive, even had the means existed, for shifting quarters. Things were different in the Maritime Provinces. The soil varied greatly, while facilities for shifting and exploring better districts were, for geographical reasons, possible. As regards the military antecedents of British Canada, however, this is of little consequence.

For the Maritime Provinces were virtually annexed *en bloc* by the United Empire Loyalists, as the exiles proudly called themselves. The small groups of Acadians on the west and British etc. around Halifax on the east were numerically and yet more morally overwhelmed by the influx, and count for little in the ethnology of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The United Empire Loyalist element, though their early sufferings in the woods were very great, once these were overcome, enjoyed a comparatively

unclouded future. In every sense, they dominated the provinces. There was no geographical contact or political semi-partnership with French Canadians, no serious influx of doubtful American immigrants such as kept the loyalists of Upper Canada in a constant state of uneasiness, and their hands metaphorically always on their sword-hilts. The echoes of the French Revolution, the news of Napoleonic victories, scarcely touched the domestic life of these Ocean Provinces. There were neither French Papists nor American intriguers of any consequence to worry them, while the British fleet was a guarantee of security to their sea-washed territories, such as their isolated kinsmen in Upper Canada could not lock to. The war 'of 1812 only indirectly threatened them, while it actually brought them prosperity. After Waterloo, when that great immigration from the Mother Country set in which still further reduced the relative strength of the old loyalists in Upper Canada, the Maritime Provinces received but a small percentage of it. A sensible proportion, too, even of this were Highland clansmen; docile, inarticulate, unambitious, and mostly segregated in groups, some of which to this very day speak Gaelic.

Nor at any time since, for reasons, some obvious, some involved, has immigration, even in the great recent boom, set seriously towards the Maritime Provinces. And it may be safely affirmed to-day that at least every second 'Blue nose' is directly descended from those brave, unfortunate people, whose devotion to the Empire forced them to start life afresh in the wild woods of the then dreaded and unknown North. If they were not, on land at any rate, called upon to sharpen their swords anew in the war of 1812, they are to a far greater extent than other modern Canadians, the offspring of those invaluable defenders of Empire of whom Governor Haldimand, despairing for the moment at their first pathetic efforts in the grim Canadian woods and at the appalling task which there confronted them, wrote to his government, 'Their true vocation is war.' To their efficiency in the arts of peace, however, the coming years soon bore ample testimony, which is not surprising, as, gentle or simple, they were of the stock who had already made powerful and flourishing colonies. But the story of the United Empire Loyalists in Upper Canada is nevertheless much more interesting. The actual movement of the ex-soldiers and their following, 10,000 souls at a rough estimate, in 1782-4 was immediately succeeded by small dribblets of quiet, humbly-placed people, who had escaped the suspicion of partisan

ship, but preferred to face the wilderness rather than desert their allegiance. They were recognised, however, as belonging to the same movement and as entitled to the honourable affix, those three distinguishing letters U.E.L., which it was seriously proposed a little later to sanction officially as a badge of caste through all succeeding generations.

The clearing of the Canadian bush was a labour almost beyond the conception of those who have never seen these formidable woods. The equipment of the settlers was lamentably deficient, for the British Government, with the best of intentions, proved unequal to such a novel and, above all, remote undertaking. These new settlements were cut off from old French Canada by a trackless wilderness, the St. Lawrence, with its many interludes of unnegotiable rapids, being the sole connecting artery. The farm implements supplied were bad and scanty; the live stock, few enough at the start, were killed by wolves or devoured by the settlers to save themselves from absolute starvation. To wring a subsistence in two or three years out of Canadian bush taxes the energies of a well-equipped hardy backwoodsman. These people were miserably equipped for such achievement, and moreover were mostly from long-settled districts, and used to comfort and luxury in varying degrees. A hundred necessities of life, including drugs and doctors, were unprocurable, while the flies and mosquitoes were terrific, and for want of millstones the hardly-won grain was pounded into flour by cannon balls! The compensations were a really good soil and a healthy climate, though the fierce winters bore cruelly on the ill-protected exiles through their early struggling years.

Their destitution, however, was in time mitigated by two sensible measures of relief. The officers who had served received a modest half-pay, and the widows of those who had fallen a small pension. Furthermore, the British Government allotted three million sterling for the relief of the loyalist exiles generally, on proving their claims of loss. This meant a 'Court of Claims' in London, with delays, from difficulties of proof, extending over years. The half-pay was for the moment of no use in Upper Canada, as there were no goods to purchase. Later on, together with the money from the 'Court of Claims,' it enabled the better sort to disentangle themselves from the woods, and, building towns and villages, to become, as merchants, lawyers, and officials, the dominating element of each province. They became, in short, an

oligarchy of aristocratic tendencies, such as had existed in Virginia or New York and other provinces before the war. Only in this case it was founded on military service to the Crown.

In Upper Canada this class instinct was intensified by the great immigration of mainly lower-class Americans from the neighbouring States, which followed the political separation of the province in 1791 from Quebec with its semi-feudal French laws. It now contained about 20,000 souls, mainly of United Empire loyalist stock, but during the next few years some 30,000 American settlers were added to the population. The excellence of its soil had now become an acknowledged fact, and the British Government proceeded to make surveys on a large scale, both in the Upper Province and in Southern Quebec, outside the French occupation. All and sundry, British and Americans, were offered land on easy terms. The British response in any serious sense was yet to come. But the Americans, tempted by such a prospect, comparatively close at home and free of the Indian danger, jumped at it and readily took the requisite oath of allegiance. Good land was more to such men than political opinions, while the new Constitution of the United States foreboded taxes and uncertainties that gave the plain man of flabby allegiance to think furiously. The United Empire Loyalists protested vigorously. In every one of these people they saw a republican and a potential rebel, and in any case an obstacle to the ascendancy they were not unnaturally determined to maintain in a country they regarded as their own. In the first suspicions they were proved by the war of 1812 to have been but partially justified. In the latter their instinct was true enough, but it took nearly fifty years of agitation before these virile oligarchists were dislodged from their grip of the Government. The British authorities thought otherwise, and interminable lists of settlers from across the Border may still be perused in the State papers by those interested in the early settlement of the country. Those of the United Empire Loyalists, too, are duly recorded, with their origin, their regiments, and their locations.

At the war of 1812 there were about 80,000 ¹ souls in the British province of Upper Canada, whose capital had recently been shifted from Niagara to York (Toronto). Probably a third were of United Empire Loyalist stock, with a few native British, the rest mainly

¹ Possibly ten per cent. of these may have been recent emigrants from Great Britain, about half of whom were Highland clansmen.

American immigrants. In the French province there were twenty to thirty thousand English-speaking Protestants, a majority recent American immigrants, settled near the frontier of Vermont, a State which remained virtually neutral. The militia called out to fight with the British regiments were of the cream of the United Empire Loyalists, and were limited to less than 2000 by the scarcity of arms and ammunition. The farmers, however, with their teams, did practically all the transport work. There were only four thousand British troops at the moment in the two Canadas, nearly half of whom were required in the Lower Province, as Montreal was persistently threatened, though never reached. For two years the other 2000, with but trifling reinforcements, supported by the loyalist militia, bore the brunt of the main attack on Upper Canada by the American armies till, in the third year, relief came from England. It is a pity that no one reads the story of that war, so stubbornly waged against tremendous odds, with almost no support from the hard-pressed Mother Country, and sorely embarrassed by a chronic scarcity of money, material, arms, and provisions. For they would realise that in none of our past wars did British soldiers fight with more indomitable courage and resolution, and would moreover understand why the sons of the loyalist soldiers of 1775-82, who fought by their side, perpetuated the military tradition bequeathed to them, through two succeeding generations which seemed in their later day to be as far removed from all prospect of serious war as any community could well be. Many of us now living, including the writer, have known and spoken with survivors of 1812-15. The spirit that war left behind it has often perplexed the English traveller, wholly absorbed in the modern and material side of a quite young country. He has been confronted on occasions by loyal outbursts of a rather unfamiliar brand, and a certain uncompromising attitude towards the United States, which is quite different from the rather vague antipathy which some Englishmen cherish towards America. In brief, he has encountered the old United Empire Loyalist military tradition, and naturally does not understand it. For the United States serve precisely the same historical purpose of whipping boy for the Canadian that Great Britain has provided for the Americans, and with much more logic. It has hitherto been the one serious enemy to provide them with opportunity for patriotic effort and for recalling martial glories.

Wave after wave of immigration rolled over inland Canada

after Waterloo. But the old leading families held their social position and military leadership in the Dominion home forces long after their political power had been destroyed by the rising forces of democracy. As late at any rate as the seventies, a rather discouraging period for amateur soldiering in Canada, the proportion of officers of United Empire Loyalist stock in the militia was very large. But two other influences have contributed not a little to keeping up the military traditions of all the provinces: first, the number of British officers and soldiers who, after Waterloo, were allotted tracts of wild land, and still more, perhaps, the British garrisons scattered over the country from Halifax to Lake Huron prior to 1870.¹ For the social intimacies and numerous marriages contracted between the leading classes, and the British officers, who regarded the country as the cream of oversea stations, had their inevitable effect.

In spite of already changing material conditions, the Boer War maintained much of the old personal tradition under a new aspect. As for the present Armageddon, with its magnificent spectacle of some 150,000 Canadians under arms, it would be impertinent and invidious to associate the uprising of a daughter nation in a great and unprecedented crisis with the traditions which have been more particularly cherished by certain sections of it. The present situation is altogether outside the scope of this paper, but it is at least safe to say that every other Nova Scotian and New Brunswicker who has gone or is going to the front will be a descendant of the men who fought and suffered for their loyalty to the Empire in the days of George III.

¹ In 1839 there aggregated 20,000 men, including a brigade of guards.

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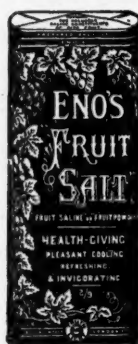
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